THE STORY OF THE APOCRYPHA

EDGAR J. GOODSPEED

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TO

JAMES W. FIFIELD, JR.

FEARLESS LEADER

AND GENEROUS FRIEND

INTRODUCTION

The Apocrypha have long been almost forgotten by the Christian public, although their claim to a place in the Greek, Latin, and English Bibles can hardly be denied. Our Puritan distaste for their religious backwardness is largely responsible for this neglect. But however unrewarding some parts of them may be, from a Christian point of view, their literary value is considerable and their historical importance, when they are properly understood, is great.

What makes them of positive importance to the New Testament, however, is the influence they exerted upon the personalities of the New Testament and the light they throw upon its life and thought, the groups we meet in its pages, and the ideas there developed. For the full understanding of the New Testament, it is not too much to say that the Apocrypha are indispensable. As a part too of the complete Bible, as a source book for the cultural study of art and literature and religion, the Apocrypha demand attention.

The Apocrypha are extremely interesting pieces of literature, and deserve a much wider reading and a more serious attention than they ordinarily receive.

This book is intended to bring the main facts as to the origin of the collection and of the several books concisely before the student and the general reader, to enable him more readily to gain from them what they have to contribute for literature, history, and religion. Much that it contains began to take shape in a series of lectures on the Apocrypha I had the honor of delivering at the California Institute of Technology in April of this year.

I am indebted to my brother, Charles T. B. Goodspeed, for helping me in reading the proofs.

EDGAR J. GOODSPEED

BEL-AIR, LOS ANGELES
June 21, 1939

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CHAPTER I

THE APOCRYPHA IN THE BIBLE

Most Americans know the Apocrypha, if they know them at all, only as some mysterious books which they used to see in their grandfather's old Family Bible, but which for some unexplained reason they do not find in theirs. Three questions naturally occur to them: First, What are the Apocrypha? Second, How did these books get into the older Bibles? And third, Once in, how did they get out? As these questions inevitably arise in people's minds whenever the Apocrypha are mentioned, they must be dealt with at the outset.

The Apocrypha are the fourteen books that stand in old English Bibles between the Old Testament and the New. They are I and II Esdras, Tobit, Judith, some Additions to Esther, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Sirach, Baruch, Susanna, the Song of the Three Children, Bel and the Dragon, the Prayer of Manasseh, and I and II Maccabees.

How did these books get into the Bible?

Christianity made its first considerable progress among people of Greek speech and culture, and so it used the Greek Old Testament. That was its first

Bible. It had arisen in Egypt, where Greek-speaking Jews in the third century before Christ had begun to translate their Hebrew scriptures into Greek. They later translated some books that were not scripture and wrote others in Greek. So in the Greek religious literature that the early church inherited from Judaism, there were some books that the Jews of Palestine never included in their Hebrew scriptures.

But it was this larger Greek Bible that the early Christians used, though now and then one like Melito of Sardis, about A.D. 180, would visit Palestine and learn that the Jewish scriptures recognized there, lacked a number of books he was accustomed to find in his Bible. But it was the Greek Bible that was presently translated into Latin, so when in A.D. 382 Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome to revise the Latin version of the Bible, and he went back to the older Hebrew text, he found that a dozen or more of the books in his Latin Bible were not in the Hebrew Old Testament of Palestine at all.

Jerome learned Hebrew, and visited Palestine, and lived there for some years. In the east, he observed that the eastern church was inclined to omit these Old Testament books that were not in the Hebrew Old Testament from its Bible, although they went on being copied with the rest of the Old Testament in the great Greek biblical manuscripts of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries. But he

could hardly omit them from the Latin Bible he was revising, for they were regarded in the west as scripture.

So he named them Apocrypha—secret or hidden books—probably having in mind the curious story in II Esdras, where Ezra dictates to his five amanuenses ninety-four books in forty days, and is then told to publish the twenty-four books that he had written first, for the worthy and the unworthy to read; but to keep the seventy books that were written last, to hand down to the wise among his people (14:45, 46). The Hebrew scriptures were usually reckoned as twenty-two or twenty-four in number, and they are evidently meant by the twenty-four books that were written first. The unpublished books were to be a sort of esoteric library for only the initiated to use.

When Jerome called these Jewish books, which he found in the Latin and Greek Bibles but not in the Hebrew, the Apocrypha, he did not mean to reject them as spurious, but to rate them as not inspired, but still ecclesiastical, and suitable for a limited church use. He left them in the Latin Bible where he found them. He did not pick them out of it and gather them in a group by themselves. So they remained in the Latin Bible when he completed his revision of it, and have formed part of the Latin Vulgate ever since.

When in the fourteenth century the Latin Bible

was translated into German, the translation contained the Apocrypha scattered through it, just as they stood in the Latin text, and when Wyclif and Purvey, in 1382–88, made the first English translation of the Bible, it was the Latin Bible, including the Apocrypha, that they translated. And when about the middle of the fifteenth century the Latin Bible was first printed, that printing contained the Apocrypha scattered through it, just as the medieval Latin manuscript Bibles had always done.

The decisive step of gathering the books Jerome had called Apocrypha together into a group and putting them by themselves at the end of the Old Testament was first taken by Martin Luther, in 1534. In that year he completed his translation of the Bible from Greek and Hebrew into German. When he had finished the Hebrew Old Testament, the Greek Apocrypha still remained, and he translated them last, making them the sixth and final part of his Bible. By his time even the Greek of one book, II Esdras, had disappeared, and he had to translate it from the Latin version of it. So it was Luther who finally acted upon the suggestion Jerome had made eleven hundred years before and grouped the Apocrypha by themselves.

Luther was not enthusiastic about the religious value of them, but he left them in his Bible, between the Old and New Testaments. And in this he was immediately followed by Myles Coverdale, in the

first printed English Bible, which appeared the next year, 1535. Luther's striking innovation in gathering the Apocrypha out of the Old Testament and putting them by themselves was taken up not only by Coverdale but from him by all the Protestant English Bibles that followed: the Matthew Bible of 1537; the Taverner Bible of 1539; the Great Bible of 1539, the first Authorized English Bible, also the work of Coverdale; the Geneva Bible, produced by the Puritans in 1560; the Bishops' Bible, the second Authorized, in 1568; and the King James, the third Authorized, in 1611. In all these the Apocrypha form a group by themselves, following the Old Testament. In the Douai translation of the Old Testament, the Catholic version made from the Latin Vulgate, and published in 1610, the Apocrypha remained scattered through the Old Testament, as they still do in the Catholic Bible, which is a revision of the Douai.

But how did the Apocrypha get out of the Bible?

The earliest of these English Bibles put at the beginning of the Apocrypha observations qualifying their authority. The Great Bible of 1539 in a prologue to them quotes with approval Jerome's judgment that they may be read for the edifying of the people, but not to confirm and strengthen the doctrine of the church. The Geneva Bible of 1560 takes a similar position: they are to be read not for doctrine but for "knowledge of the history" and "in-

struction of godly manners." In the second Authorized Bible, the Bishops' of 1568, however, they are introduced with no such qualification, and in the third Authorized Bible, the King James of 1611, they are headed simply "Apocrypha." Indeed they were regarded as so integral a part of the King James Bible that George Abbot, one of the New Testament workers on that version, after he became Archbishop of Canterbury issued an ordinance that anyone who published the English Bible without the Apocrypha should be imprisoned for a year.

But the Puritans had already begun to demand copies of their own Geneva version without the Apocrypha; they felt not so much the critical objection, that these books were not in the Hebrew Bible, as the practical one, that they were for the most part so sensational in character and on so low a moral and religious level. As early as 1599 copies of the Geneva Bible began to omit the sheets containing the Apocrypha, even though the leaf numbering which continued through the New Testament showed that they had been left out. As Sir Frederic Kenyon crisply puts it, "The Puritans persecuted the Apocrypha."

The King James Bible itself, in spite of Archbishop Abbot's ruling, began in 1629 to appear occasionally without the Apocrypha, and while the Sixth Article of the Church of England definitely affirmed that they belonged to the Bible, the Puri-

tan influence in the rising denominational movements more and more pushed them into the background. This practical rejection of them found expression in 1827, in the action of the British and American Bible societies declining to use any of the funds given them in publishing the Apocrypha. Most printings of the King James Bible during the century that followed omitted them, and now it is difficult to find the Apocrypha in any English Bibles except those designed for pulpit use. The Cambridge Press has recently issued one, which can, it is true, be ordered through a bookstore, but few American booksellers have it for sale. Almost all the modern publishers of the King James Bible tacitly omit the Apocrypha. Yet, whatever may be our personal opinions of the Apocrypha, it is a historical fact that they formed an integral part of the King James Version, and any Bible claiming to represent that version should either include the Apocrypha, or state that it is omitting them. Otherwise a false impression is created.

The English Revision Committee organized in 1870, completed and published the Apocrypha in 1894, but sometimes printed them in smaller type than the Old and New Testament. The American Revision Committee did not revise them at all, although some copies of the American Standard Version include the English Revision of the Apocrypha, though in smaller type than the rest of the volume.

Whatever may be thought of the English Revised Version of the Old and New Testaments, there can be no doubt that the Revised Apocrypha fall far below it in quality. Indeed the translation of the Apocrypha has always lagged behind that of the Old Testament, and especially of the New. When Coverdale published his English Bible in 1535, he frankly described it on the title-page as "faithfully and truly translated out of Dutch and Latin into English." Coverdale did indeed have Tyndale's translation of the New Testament from the Greek, and his translation of the first five books of the Old Testament from the Hebrew, and these he introduced into his Bible. For the rest of the Old Testament and for the Apocrypha, however, he was dependent upon the German versions of Zwingli (1529) and Luther (1534), the Latin Vulgate and the Latin version of Pagninus (1528); he made no pretense of translating the Apocrypha from the Greek. He simply translated them from the Latin, with the aid of these recent German versions.

The Thomas Matthew Bible of 1537 benefited by Tyndale's further work on the Hebrew Old Testament which he left half-finished at the time of his execution in 1536. For the second half of it and for the Apocrypha, that Bible reproduced the work of Coverdale. The Great Bible of 1539 was a revision by Coverdale of the Thomas Matthew

Bible, and the Apocrypha in it therefore still rested upon the German and Latin versions.

The makers of the Geneva Bible of 1560 knew Greek, however, and were able to revise the Apocrypha with the aid of that knowledge. Some books of it indeed they found so imperfect that they actually made their own translations of them from the Greek. The Bishops' and King James versions simply followed these earlier versions as far as the Apocrypha were concerned, revising them cautiously in the light of the Greek.

The quality of the English in the King James Apocrypha is definitely inferior to that in the rest of that version. It abounds in such renderings as:

> Artaxerxes his letters [I Esd. 2:30],
> He sticketh not to spend his life with his wife [I Esd. 4:21],
> All men do well like of her works [I Esd. 4:39],
> And now is all Israel aloft [I Esd. 8:92],
> That leaveth his flock in the hands of cruel wolves [II Esd. 5:18],
> Whiles the lion spake these words [II Esd. 12:1],
> They slept both that night [Tob. 8:9],
> He will speak submissly [Ecclus. 29:5],
> Cocker thy child [Ecclus. 30:9],
> They took great indignation [Bel 28],
> It would have pitied a man to see [II Macc. 3:21],
> Not long afore [II Macc. 10:6],
> With proud brags [II Macc. 15:32].

This neglect on the part of the Apocrypha committee of 1604–11 prepares us to understand the

similar want of concern for the Apocrypha exhibited by the English revisers of 1870–94. Most of the above readings and many more like them persist in that revision. But of course it was no part of the plan of revision to remove the archaisms of the old translations; on the contrary, the rule was that if a rendering had to be changed, English as old as King James or older should be employed.

On the other hand, it must be recognized that for some books the revisers found even revision inadequate and virtually translated the books in question from Greek into English. Yet it remains true that a considerable part of the English Revised Version still rests upon the Latin version Coverdale first translated for his Bible of 1535.

The aversion to translating the Apocrypha from the Greek is curiously illustrated by the translations of the Septuagint made in the nineteenth century: the first by Charles Thomson, in 1808, and the second by Sir Lancelot Brenton, in 1844. One translation was made in America, and one in England, and Brenton had not seen Thomson's, although he had heard of it; but both omit the Apocrypha from their versions.

Not less surprising is the procedure of the group of scholars organized by Dr. R. H. Charles to produce the two large volumes, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, published at Oxford in 1913. While more than half of them produced new English

translations of the individual books assigned to them, a minority contented themselves with reprinting the English Revised Version. So while individual books have here and there been translated by highly competent scholars, there has been no translation of the Greek Apocrypha directly into English throughout, until the American translation of 1938.

This neglect is all the more strange in view of the literary character of much of the Apocrypha. To the lively narratives and crisp epigrams in which the Apocrypha abound, the archaisms of sixteenth-century English are no longer appropriate, and the familiar arguments for the standard translations, that their language is so poetic and so familiar, and so freighted with religious associations, certainly have no bearing here. Very few people nowadays know what the Apocrypha are, much less what they have to say. Certainly the Apocrypha offer a fair field for retranslation, especially when it is remembered that they have so long remained untranslated directly from Greek into English.

It has been well said that no one can have the complete Bible as a source book for the cultural study of art, literature, and religion without the Apocrypha, and as an aid to understanding the New Testament the Apocrypha are simply indispensable. How did they originate and what are their contributions to history, literature, morality, and religion?

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What are the Apocrypha?
2. Name them.
3. Who first called them by this name?
4. What did he mean by it?
5. Who first separated them from the Old Testament books?
6. How did they come to have a place in the King James Bible?
7. To what text or version do the standard English translations of the Apocrypha ultimately go back?
8. What translations of the Greek Old Testament were made in the last century?
9. What was their attitude to the Apocrypha?
10. What did the English revisers do with the Apocrypha?
11. What did the American revisers do with them?
12. How did the Puritans treat the Apocrypha?
13. Have the Apocrypha been in all the four Authorized English Bibles, from the Great to the English Revised?
14. What is the attitude of the Bible societies to the Apocrypha?

CHAPTER II

THE BOOK OF TOBIT

Of all the Apocrypha the earliest in date is the Book of Tobit, written about 200 B.C. Tobit is the ideal Jew. In times when Greek ideals were coming into fashion, Greeks and Jews too needed to be reminded of the strong features of the Jewish character. Progressive young Jews had to be kept in line, and heathen made to see the values of Judaism as a way of life.

So early in the second century before Christ some Jew in Egypt wrote the Story of Tobit, to exalt the Jewish ideal in the eyes of Jews and Gentiles alike. For the Jews in Egypt were already at work to win recognition and if possible acceptance of their ideals from the peoples among whom they lived. They were translating their Hebrew scriptures into Greek, to make their religion and their culture known in the stirring Greek world in which they found themselves in Egypt. It is as a part of this missionary movement in Egyptian Judaism, in the days of the first Ptolemies, that Tobit must be understood. It was probably written in Greek, for the movement of which it was a part was putting Hebrew literature into Greek, and would hardly

express itself in the language from which Egyptian Judaism was so pointedly turning away.

Tobit is represented as a Jew of Galilee, in the eighth century before Christ. He does not join in the idolatry of the northern kingdom, but goes to Jerusalem to the feasts, taking three-tenths of his income to distribute there. With the rest of Israel, he is carried into captivity by the Assyrians; but in Nineveh he gains the king's favor and becomes his buyer. He lays up money, and deposits it with a friend in Ragae, in Media. With the accession of Sennacherib, his fortunes change. His pious practice of burying the bodies of the king's Jewish victims offends the king, and Tobit is stripped of his property and has to flee for his life.

Under Sennacherib's successor, Esarhaddon, Tobit is recalled to Nineveh, through his nephew Ahikar, who had become the new king's vizier. He at once resumes his pious practice of burying the neglected dead, and in consequence of his scrupulous devotion to the ceremonial law contracts blindness. Ahikar is transferred to Elymais, and Tobit becomes dependent on his wife's labor for support. They quarrel, and Tobit in his humiliation prays for death.

Meantime far away in Ecbatana, in Media, another was offering the same prayer. It was Sarah, a kinswoman of Tobit. She had been given in marriage to seven husbands in succession, and each one

had been killed in the bridal chamber by the demon Asmodeus. The taunts of her maids drive her to despair, and she too prays for death.

It now occurs to Tobit to recover the money he had deposited with his friend in Ragae, so long before, and he decides to send his son Tobias to get it. Feeling that he is sending him out to face the world alone, he gives him a series of paternal admonitions, and then directs him to find a traveling companion and guide for the journey. He finds a certain Azariah, who is the angel Raphael in disguise, and they set off for Ragae. Lodging beside the Tigris on their way, they catch a large fish, and Tobias, instructed by his guide, preserves its heart, liver, and gall, and takes them with him. At Ecbatana they visit Sarah's father Raguel, who is a kinsman of Tobit, and Tobias, who has been told Sarah's story by his guide, asks for her hand. Raguel tells him what has happened to her seven husbands, but Raphael has told Tobias how to deal with the demon, and he insists upon marrying her. That night, when the demon approaches them, Tobias takes the ashes of the incense and puts the heart and liver of the fish on them and makes a smoke, and this drives the demon to the uttermost parts of Upper Egypt, where the angel binds him. Tobias and Sarah pray together and fall asleep. Two weeks of marriage feasting follow, in the midst of which Tobias sends Azariah on to Ragae to get Tobit's

money. When he returns with it and the days of feasting are over, Raguel insists upon dividing his property with his son-in-law, and Tobias and his wife set out with Raphael for Nineveh.

Meantime Tobit and his wife have become alarmed over Tobias' prolonged absence, and anxiously await his return. When he comes, under the angel's direction he restores his father's sight with the gall of the fish, and there is a happy reunion. The old people welcome their daughter-in-law, and a second marriage feast, of seven days, is held. When they offer Tobias' guide a present, he makes himself known as Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, admonishes them to prayer, fasting, charity, and uprightness, and vanishes from their sight. Tobit bursts into a song of praise, and predicts that Jerusalem will be rebuilt in splendor. He lives to a great age, and dies bidding his son move to Media. Tobias obeys his father's dying wish, and lives to hear of Nineveh's destruction.

Persian and Egyptian influences are marked in Tobit. Its author was not afraid to incorporate materials from the pagan world; it is not impossible that he wrote in part to counteract an Egyptian work, "The Tractate of Khons," which told how, with the aid of that Theban deity, a demon had been cast out of a princess. Part of its action, like part of Tobit's, is laid in Ecbatana. The writer's ignorance of the geography of western Asia would

not be strange in Egypt; he speaks as though the Tigris were east of Nineveh, on the way to Ecbatana (6:1), as the Greeks supposed, when in fact Nineveh lay on the east bank of that river. The use made of the organs of the fish resembles some practices of Egyptian medicine. The Story of Ahikar, which so influenced Tobit, was well known in Egypt.

But the Persian influence is even more marked. The appearance of angels and demons is a new development in Judaism and reflects Persian religion, probably in the Magian stage of its development. Asmodeus is Aēshma Daēva of Persian demonology, and the dog that follows Tobias on his travels recalls the dog that attends the Persian Sraosha. The dog was a sacred animal in Zoroastrianism, but dogs were generally despised by the Jews; they did not regard dogs as companions and friends, but as scavengers and outcasts. So the writer gathered his materials from wide and varied fields, and wrote with Greek breadth in Egypt, where under the Ptolemies Greek and Jewish currents met and mingled.

Tobit is a religious romance, intended for the general reader and admirably suited to interest and instruct him. That it begins in the first person and presently lapses into the third is nothing strange in a time when the author of Daniel begins in Hebrew, lapses into Aramaic in 2:4, and quietly returns to Hebrew in 8:1. The writer's art is not per-

fect, but he has told a good story, and clothed it with religious meaning: God does not forget his servants. Yet there are also unmistakable touches of humor in Tobit, as when Raphael says to Tobit, "Are you in search of a tribe and family, or a hired man to go with your son?" and when Tobias begs to be excused from the risk involved in marrying Sarah, solely on account of the grief it would cause his parents if he were to die (6:14).

While the action is represented as taking place in the eighth and seventh centuries before Christ, before and after the Fall of the Northern Kingdom, the book was probably written early in the second century before Christ, but before the Maccabean uprising which began about 166 B.C. And yet the writer of Tobit has many Pharisaic traits: belief in angels and demons, regard for Law and scripture, clean foods, and ceremonial ablutions; emphasis upon charity, fasting, and prayer; going beyond the Law in setting aside not one but three tenths of one's income for the purposes of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Certainly this was the religious ideal of those Jewish saints who soon after rallied about the Maccabees, and later became the Pharisees.

The influence of Tobit on the New Testament is very marked. It prepares us for the very specific demonology and angelology of the gospels and the Revelation. Gabriel and Michael are, like Raphael, among the seven holy angels (12:15). Tobit's pious

practice of burying the neglected dead prepares us to understand the action of Joseph of Arimathea in the gospels. The Sadducees' story of the woman who had had seven husbands and no children reminds the reader of Sarah and her seven husbands. Tobit's dream of the future glory of Jerusalem with walls of precious stones and battlements of gold prepares us for the picture of the New Jerusalem in the Revelation.

In the Latin Vulgate version of Tobit and hence in the earliest English Bibles Tobias and Sarah are described as giving the first three nights after their marriage to religious exercise and postponing their wedlock until the fourth, and so this became the practice of religious people in the Middle Ages.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Read the Book of Tobit through in one or more translations.
2. What do you think of its religious level?
3. What was its purpose?
4. Where was it written?
5. What sources contributed to it?
6. How does Tobit resemble the Pharisee of later times?
7. In what period is the action placed?
8. Who is meant by Asmodeus?
9. What literary value has the story?
10. What literary weaknesses does it exhibit?
11. What is its social ideal?
12. What is its religious ideal?

CHAPTER III

ECCLESIASTICUS, OR THE WISDOM OF SIRACH

In the first quarter of the second century before Christ there lived in Jerusalem a Hebrew sage or wise man of great sagacity and sense. His name was Jeshua the son of Sirach, or Sira. While he cultivated the proverbial style so familiar to us from the books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes, and almost worshiped the pursuit of wisdom, in which he found a reflection and disclosure of the will of God, fit to stand side by side with the Law itself, he also appreciated as few had ever done the beauty of the Temple ceremonial, with its stately priests and chanting choirs. He was a man in fact of great breadth and insight, for he perceived the religious character of man's daily work, and said of the farmer, the jeweler, the smith, and the potter that they support the fabric of the world, and their prayer is in the practice of their trade. He was alive to the beauty of nature, the morning star, the full moon, the rainbow, the rose, the lily, and the cypress. He saw the clouds flying out like birds, the snow falling like birds fluttering down, the hoarfrost poured over the earth like salt, or freezing into

points of thorns, and the water putting on the ice like a breastplate.

He was no less keenly alive to the comradeship of his fellow-men, and must have gone to many a banquet in Jerusalem. He tells quaintly and even humorously of how one should behave at such affairs, if one is asked to preside, or speak; how one should converse, eat, and take one's leave. It was evidently the practice to have speaking and music at these dinners, for one is not to prolong his remarks if a musical entertainment is to follow. One is to be polite in conversation, and considerate in one's table manners, not to be the first to help himself, but the first to leave off, for good manners' sake.

The old sage had a high opinion of the physician and his services, and a real regard for the workingman's right to prompt payment for his work. Yet he believed in beating a lazy or disobedient servant, and in corporal punishment for his children. He had a keen sense of the disadvantages under which a poor man labors, and of the partiality generally shown to the rich.

With much practical common sense, this sage of old Jerusalem combines a great deal of moral and of religious insight. Jewish wisdom was generally religious in tone. Children are to honor their parents by providing for their necessities. But a father should not divide his property among his

children before his death, for he cannot be sure how this may alter their behavior to him. While Jeshua fully appreciates the value of a good wife, his general view of woman is low, and he regards a daughter almost as a calamity—there are so many ways in which she may bring disgrace upon her father!

Jeshua has a great deal to say about the responsibilities of friendship; one must never forsake an old friend. One must give freely to charity, but not spoil the gift by harsh or thoughtless words. What a man says matters a great deal, and the mouth needs careful discipline. Life and death, the family and society, parents and children, employers and employees, friends and neighbors, rich and poor, loans and sureties, thrift and extravagance, prayer and charity, feasting and mourning—these and many other matters are keenly handled, though not always humanely or with refinement. In fact almost every aspect of ancient conduct and behavior is discussed in the book, but with no especial plan or system. One feels that its parts were written at different times, as the writer's interest and observation moved him, and gradually accumulated in his hands until they formed the book we know, which is really a collection of all the poetic and proverbial pieces written by Jeshua in the course of his mature life. So it presents a fine and full picture of the Jewish ideal of life at the beginning of the second century before Christ.

Jeshua must have been the leading sage of Jerusalem in his day. But he was also a traveled man. It was perhaps the contact with Greek ways of thinking to which these travels had led that moved him to associate uprightness with wisdom, as Jewish Wisdom literature generally sought to do. He speaks at the very end of his book of how he had prayed for wisdom, when he was very young, before he went on his wanderings (51:13); and there is probably something autobiographical about his picture of the life of the ideal sage:

> He will serve among great men,
> And appear before rulers.
> He will travel through the lands of strange peoples,
> And test what is good and what is evil among men [39:4].

Jeshua may have visited Egypt and Syria as an emissary of his people, and he may refer to personal experiences in those courts when he says:

> I have seen much in my travels,
> And I understand more than I can describe;
> I have often been in danger of death,
> But I have been saved by these qualities [34:11, 12].

> An unrighteous tongue uttered slander to the king;
> My soul drew nigh to death,
> And my life was near to Hades beneath;
> Then I remembered your mercy, Lord, ...
> And I sent up my supplication from the earth, ...
> And my prayer was heard,
> For you saved me from destruction [51:6–12].

Jeshua found great satisfaction in the dignity and beauty of the Temple service and ritual, as conducted by his friend Simon the high priest:

> How glorious he was, surrounded by the people,
> As he came out of the sanctuary!
> Like the morning star among the clouds,
> Like the moon when it is full;
> Like the sun shining forth upon the sanctuary of the
> Most High;
> When he assumed his glorious robe,
> And put on glorious perfection,
> And when he went up to the holy altar,
> He made the court of the sanctuary glorious
> [50:5–7, 11].

There is no mistaking the genuine enthusiasm for the ritual and the high priest in these lines.

The construction of new foundations for the Temple inclosure, a large cistern, and fortifications for the city which Sirach ascribes to Simon (50: 1–4) can hardly be the improvements Josephus describes as authorized by Antiochus the Great on his visit to Jerusalem after his victory over Egypt in the battle of Panion in 198 B.C., for Simon died a year or two before that date. But it is possible that the work, undertaken under Simon, Antiochus ordered completed.

Jeshua must have written down his Wisdom from time to time, for it is quite unorganized and miscellaneous. The book as we have it seems to be his accumulated writings of this kind, loosely put to-

gether. He wrote of course in Hebrew, but the original Hebrew of his book no longer exists. The considerable Hebrew portions of Ecclesiasticus, amounting to about two-thirds of the whole, that have come to light in recent years in medieval manuscripts are probably retranslations of it from Greek back into its original tongue, not genuine remains of the original Hebrew. But half a century after he had finished his book, his grandson, in the thirty-eighth year of King Euergetes (132 B.C.), went down into Egypt, and there observing the current movement to translate Jewish literature into Greek, felt that his grandfather's voice too ought to be heard, and translated the book into Greek.

It must have been about 130 B.C. or soon after that this work of translation was done. The translator apologizes for any possible shortcomings in his translation, because as he says, "Things once expressed in Hebrew do not have the same force in them when put into another language; and not only this book, but the Law itself, and the prophecies, and the rest of the books, differ not a little in translation from the original." It is evident from this remark that when Jeshua's grandson made his translation the work of putting the Hebrew scriptures into Greek was largely done. Just why it was called Ecclesiasticus in Greek is a question; perhaps as the ecclesiastical book par excellence, or perhaps under the influence of the name of Ecclesiastes.

The time at which the Wisdom of Sirach was written can also be gathered from the fact that it gives no indication that the king of Syria was trying to force the Jews to give up the observance of the Law and adopt Greek ways of living—the policy that led to the Maccabean revolt in 166 B.C. And the long account of the heroes of Jewish history that fills the latter part of the book, chapters 44–50, culminates in the great high priest Simon, son of Onias, who died in 200 B.C. After that date therefore and before 175 Jeshua probably finished writing his Wisdom, which his grandson translated into Greek half a century later.

Jeshua was fond of music; not only in the Temple of the Lord where

> The singers too praised him with their voices;
> They made sweet music in the fullest volume [50:18].

but at dinners, where the speaking must not interfere with the music (32:3), for

> A carbuncle signet in a gold setting
> Is a musical concert at a banquet.
> An emerald signet richly set in gold
> Is the melody of music with the taste of wine [32:5, 6].

He had a sense of humor:

> If you hear something said, let it die with you!
> Have courage, it will not make you burst [19:10].

One man keeps silence because he has nothing to say,
And another keeps silence because he knows it is the time for it.
One man buys much for little,
And yet pays for it seven times over [20:6, 12].

A man who lectures to a fool lectures to one who is dozing,
And at the conclusion he will say, "What was it?" [22:8].

Sand and salt and a lump of iron
Are easier to bear than a man without understanding [22:15].

Who pities a snake-charmer when he is bitten,
Or all those who have to do with wild animals?
In the same way who will pity a man who approaches a sinner,
And mingles with his sins [12:13, 14]?

A cheerful face is a sign of a happy heart,
But it takes painstaking thought to compose proverbs [13:26]!

Jeshua is suspicious of the man who has no fixed abode—no address, as we say:

For who will trust an active robber
Who bounds from one city to another?
So who will trust a man who has no nest,
And spends the night wherever evening overtakes him [36:26]?

His reflections range from the amusing to the profound:

> The bee is one of the smallest of winged creatures,
> But what she produces is the greatest of sweets [11:3].
>
> One man toils and labors and hurries,
> And is all the worse off [11:11].
>
> Count no one happy before his death [11:28].
>
> For a man's soul is sometimes wont to bring him news
> Better than seven watchmen sitting high on a watch-tower [37:14].
>
> Where there are many hands, lock things up [42:6].

He has much to say about after-dinner speaking:

> Speak concisely; say much in few words;
> Act like a man who knows more than he says [32:8].
>
> Prepare what you have to say, and then you will be listened to [33:4].

He knew the worth of a servant:

> If you have a servant, treat him like a brother,
> For you need him as you do your own life [33:31].

And the insecurity of kings:

> Many sovereigns have had to sit on the ground,
> While a man who was never thought of has assumed the diadem [11:5].

And then, speaking of the Lord:

> Where man ends, he begins,
> And when man stops, will he be perplexed [18:7]?

The longest continuous section of the Wisdom of Sirach is the Praise of Famous Men, chapters 44–50. The introduction to it is the best-known passage in the Apocrypha:

> Let us now praise distinguished men,
> Our forefathers before us
> Men who exercised authority in their reigns,
> And were renowned for their might!
> Leaders of the people in deliberation and understanding,
> Men of learning for the people,
> Wise in their words of instruction;
> Composers of musical airs,
> Authors of poems in writing;
> All these were honored in their generation,
> And were a glory in their day.
> Peoples will recite their wisdom,
> And the congregation declare their praise [44:1–15]!

He goes on to characterize briefly a long series of Hebrew worthies from Enoch, Noah, and Abraham down to Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, and finally the great high priest Simon, his contemporary and friend. One might almost think the whole was a funeral oration, in poetic form, for Simon. The omission of Ezra from the list has been remarked, and may mean that Jeshua did not approve of the rising scribal type of Judaism.

The Wisdom of Sirach is the longest book of Jewish wisdom that we possess, and is further remark-

able as coming as a whole from the mind of one man. So it constitutes an authentic full-length portrait of a great Jewish sage, of wide experience, sound feeling, and deep piety, from the last generation before the Maccabean war. Its remarkable variety of subject and its sustained vigor and penetration make it a work of unfailing interest and instruction.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Read Ecclesiasticus through.
2. What most impresses you about it?
3. Do you observe any particular plan of organization?
4. How do you explain this?
5. What religious message does it convey?
6. Was the writer interested in the temple ritual?
7. Was he sympathetic with the scribal movement?
8. Was he a man of wide experience or travel?
9. When did he write and where?
10. What seems to have been his social position?
11. Had he any literary gifts?
12. What picture of himself and his tastes does the writer give?
13. What do you think the finest parts of the book?
14. How did the book come to be preserved?

CHAPTER IV

THE SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN

When the Syrian kings were trying, with the cooperation of a Jewish party already attracted by Greek civilization, to impose Greek customs upon the Jews of Palestine, about 168 B.C., forcing them to give up circumcision, destroying copies of the Law wherever they found them, and breaking up their Temple service, the deeply pious Jews, the predecessors of the Pharisees of later days, felt it most keenly. In those dark days one of them composed a prayer of penitence, which has come down to us imbedded in the Greek version of the Book of Daniel. It is the Prayer of Azariah. The agonizing situation it reflects had come about in the following way.

The conquests of Alexander the Great had enormously extended the influence of Greek civilization, and his successors carried on this work. It became the fashion all over the Near East to adopt Greek speech, sports, dress, arts, ideas, and customs. The lands about the eastern Mediterranean were rapidly being Hellenized.

The Jews had long resisted such pressure, which they saw threatened their religion as well as their

habits, but some even of them were beginning to yield to Greek influences, when the accession of a new king of Syria reinforced the Hellenizing influences and made continued Jewish isolation apparently impossible. Judea was subject to Syria, and Antiochus Epiphanes, becoming king of Syria in 175 B.C., resolved to raise his whole realm to the level of Greek civilization. Some Jews co-operated with him in this campaign, but most of them refused to relinquish their cherished faith and practices. His efforts culminated in the sacking and desecration of the Temple and the erection of an altar to Zeus on the great altar of burnt offering, the "dreadful desecration" spoken of in Daniel.

These misguided efforts to impose Greek fashions upon the Jews called forth violent opposition on the part of the pious party, the Chasidim, devout adherents of the Law, who became the Pharisees of later days, and also of the patriotic party, who came to be called the Hasmoneans, from an ancestor of the family which assumed their leadership. For when the agent of Antiochus went to a little town called Modin to enforce participation in heathen sacrifices and compel leading citizens to eat pork, an old priest named Mattathias and his sons resisted his efforts and killed him, and then fled to inaccessible parts of the wilderness. From these retreats they rallied their sympathizers, and organized such successful resistance that in a little more

than two years they reoccupied Jerusalem and rededicated the Temple.

The heroic story of the Maccabean struggle, as it was called from the name of Mattathias' most warlike son Judas Maccabeus, was told long afterward in I Maccabees, but out of the days of the conflict came the Book of Daniel, about 165 B.C. And when Daniel was translated into Greek many years later, some additions were made to it; among them what we know as the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Children, which were inserted after Dan. 3:23.

The Prayer of Azariah (vss. 1–21) was probably composed in Hebrew, by one of these Jewish Puritans in the darkest days of religious oppression just before the outbreak of armed resistance on the part of Judas Maccabeus and his brothers. It sees in the miseries of the Jews the judgment of God upon them for their wickedness and disobedience:

> All that you have brought upon us,
> And all that you have done to us,
> You have done in justice.
> You have handed us over to enemies without law,
> to hateful rebels,
> And to a ruthless king, the most wicked ruler in
> all the world,
> Yet we cannot open our mouths.
> And now there is no prince, or prophet, or leader,
> No burnt offering, or sacrifice, or offering, or incense,
> No place to make an offering before you, or to find
> mercy.

The Temple worship had evidently been discontinued and the altar profaned, and this enables us to fix the date as between 168 and 165 B.C.

This great prayer of penitence and entreaty is one of the enduring contributions of the Apocrypha to liturgy. It was afterward introduced into the Greek translations of the Book of Daniel partly for its own sake and partly perhaps to permit a Jew to take the lead in blessing and glorifying God and not leave it to the heathen king Nebuchadnezzar, 3:28. Putting the prayer before the story of the deliverance of Azariah and his companions from the fiery furnace has also the effect of making their deliverance an answer to his prayer:

> Deliver us in your wonderful way,
> And glorify your name, Lord [vs. 19].

Another relic of these stirring days is the Song of the Three Children, described in the Book of Daniel as thrown into the fiery furnace, for their faithfulness to their ancestral religion. It too is the work of one who had agonized through the days of persecution and now, when the Temple was rededicated and the new altar built, felt all the tremendous reaction of joy and gratitude. It is a splendid hymn of thanksgiving, doubtless composed in Hebrew in the days of the Maccabean triumph, toward the middle of the second century before Christ. It was evidently incorporated into the Book of Daniel when that book was translated into

Greek, and in the Greek Daniel it follows the Prayer of Azariah. It obviously owes much to Ps. 148:

> Praise the Lord from the earth,
> Sea-monsters and all deeps!
> Fire and hail, snow and fog,
> Stormy wind, fulfilling his word!
> Mountains and all hills,
> Fruit-trees and all cedars!
> Wild beasts and all cattle,
> Reptiles and winged birds [vss. 7–10]!

Its striking antiphonal character recalls Ps. 136; with its oft repeated refrain, so familiar in the traditional form:

> For his mercy endureth forever.

It has been much used in public worship, in Roman and English churches, and still lives in Christian liturgy as the *Benedicite* of the prayer-book. It suggests, and perhaps suggested, St. Francis' great Canticle of the Sun:

> Praised be my Lord God with all his creatures, and specially our brother the sun, ...
>
> Praised be my Lord God for our sister the moon, and for the stars which he has set clear and lovely in heaven.
>
> Praised be my Lord for my brother the wind, and for air and cloud, calms and all weather.

In it the worshiper calls upon all the forces of nature—waters, sun, moon, stars, rain, wind, fire, cold, light, and darkness, clouds and mountains, seas and rivers, whales, birds, and beasts—to join men and angels in praising God. "In this hymn of

adoration man undertakes, as Nature's priest and spokesman, to give utterance to the silent service of worship which the earth, through all its graduated activities, without speech or language, forever fulfils."[1] In Ps. 136 the refrain is repeated twenty-six times. But in the Song, the refrain or response,

Sing praise to him and greatly exalt him forever,

occurs thirty-two times, which makes it the most extended hymn in this style in the whole Bible.

We may think of it as first used in the days of Judas Maccabeus' brother and successor Jonathan, toward the middle of the second century before Christ, when in the rededicated Temple they might well sing

Blessed are you in the temple of your holy glory.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. *References:* 'Bumpus, *Dictionary of Ecclesiastical Terms* (1911), p. 33.
2. What situation is reflected in the Prayer of Azariah?
3. What is the religious attitude of the Prayer?
4. To what party did the writer belong?
5. Why was it introduced into Daniel?
6. What situation called forth the Song of the Three Children?
7. To what type of psalm does it belong?
8. What is its theme?
9. What older psalm influenced its writer?
10. What place has it in modern worship?
11. Is it appropriate in its place in Daniel?
12. When were these additions probably introduced into the Book of Daniel?

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST BOOK OF ESDRAS

The recovery of Jerusalem and the restoration of the Temple worship by Judas Maccabeus and his followers naturally reminded the Jews of similar events in their history long before, when after their exile in Babylon they had come back and rebuilt the Temple and revived its worship. So it came about that a Jew in Egypt, inspired by the stirring events of the Maccabean struggle and keenly in sympathy with the scribal Judaism that Ezra had founded, wrote in Greek an imaginative account of those earlier restorations of Jerusalem, embellishing the history with legend and folklore as the Jews out in the Greek world delighted to do, and making it all culminate in the scribal activity of Ezra, reading and explaining the Law to the returned exiles.

He was one of those Greek-speaking Jews of Egypt who were anxious to make their history and culture known to the great Greek world of which they had become a part, and he wrote his book with that intention. He based his narrative upon parts of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, but he did not know them in their Greek forms. Probably they had not yet been translated into Greek, for he

wrote about the middle of the second century before Christ, in the midst of that great Jewish movement to get Jewish literature into the Greek language and Jewish history and institutions before the Greek world of which the Greek version of the Old Testament was to be the most commanding monument. But he enriched his narrative with the delightful story of the Three Guardsmen, an unmistakable bit of folklore, which marks his book as unquestionably composed in Greek.

The story begins with an account of Josiah's great celebration of the Passover in 621 B.C., when he reformed the Jewish religion after the half-heathen reigns of Manasseh and Amon. It goes on to describe the collapse of the Jewish nation, paraphrasing the account in Chronicles. Passing lightly over the years of the Exile, it resumes with the proclamation of Cyrus, king of Persia (538 B.C.), permitting the Jews to return home. Sheshbazzar heads the returning exiles, taking with him all the fifty-four hundred and sixty-nine dishes that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple when he despoiled it.

The narrative goes on to say that in the time of Artaxerxes (465–425 B.C.) the Samaritans and other hostile neighbors of the returning Jews persuaded the king to stop the rebuilding of the Temple, and it proceeds to tell how in the second year of Darius (520 B.C.) its resumption was authorized.

This came about in the following dramatic manner. Three members of the king's bodyguard on duty in his antechamber were keeping themselves awake by debating what was the strongest thing in the world. One said wine, another, the king, and the third, woman, though truth was really strongest of all. They wrote these answers down and put them under the king's pillow, so that he might decide between them when he awoke. But he submitted the question to his courtiers and called upon the three to defend their answers. The decision of the company was unanimous for truth; "Truth," they all shouted, "is great and supremely strong." The third guardsman was asked to name the reward he most wanted. He turned out to be Zerubbabel and asked to be allowed to rebuild the Temple.

The story goes on to tell the number and ancestry of the exiles who then proceeded with Zerubbabel to Jerusalem to revive the ancient Jewish worship there. Zerubbabel and his party reached Jerusalem, carrying back the gold dishes Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple almost seventy years before. They began to rebuild the Temple, in the face of protests from neighboring governors, but the king had the records of the matter looked up in the Persian archives and found that Cyrus had authorized the rebuilding of it at the beginning of his reign. Four years after, the

Temple was finished and dedicated—just seventy years after its destruction as Jeremiah had prophesied (1:58)—and the returned exiles celebrated the Passover with rejoicing.

More than a century later, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, 397 B.C. (for Artaxerxes II is probably meant), Ezra the scribe came from Babylon to Jerusalem with another company of returning exiles, including priests, Levites, and Temple attendants. Ezra carried a commission from the king, and takes up the story in the first person, just as he does in Ezra 7:27, 28. He gives the names of the leading men of his party, secures a reinforcement of priests, and carries a large sum of money and a quantity of Temple dishes of gold and silver.

Arrived in Jerusalem Ezra is horrified to learn that the Jewish people, including priests and leaders, have been intermarrying with non-Israelites. He rouses them to repentance, and they promise to cast off their foreign wives, and do so. The new colony settles in the country, a great meeting is held, and Ezra and his assistants read the Law aloud and explain it to the congregation. So the story ends, with Israel restored to its land and resuming its long-interrupted religious life, with the Law and the Temple.

It will be observed that the book records three returns of Jewish exiles, one in 538 B.C. or soon after, headed by Sheshbazzar; one in 520 B.C., headed by

Zerubbabel; and one in 397 B.C., headed by Ezra, and curiously enough each one brings back the long-lost sacred dishes which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple when he sacked it (2:12; 4:44, 57; 8:60).

It is clear that the narrative is based directly upon II Chronicles, chapters 35, 36; Ezra 1; 4:7–24 (after which the story of the Three Guardsmen is introduced); 2:1–70; 3:1—4:5; 4:24—10:44 (the end of Ezra); and Neh. 7:73—8:12. Practically nothing is added to what is supplied by these parts of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, except the Guardsmen story in I Esd. 3:1—5:6.

The closeness with which the Hebrew of II Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah is followed by I Esdras where it uses them, makes it very improbable that those books had been translated into Greek when it was written, and the inclusion of the folk tale of the Three Guardsmen shows that I Esdras is no translation from the Hebrew but was written in Greek; its view of woman and her position is entirely alien to Jewish ideas, for the woman who is praised in I Esdras is not the docile housewife of Jewish lore but the captivating beauty of Greek romance. The whole story is thoroughly pagan in tone. The Three Choices—Wine, King, Woman—form a typical folklore pattern, to which Truth has been none too skilfully added. And even the exaltation of Truth is more Greek than Jewish;

the Jew often grew lyrical in praise of Wisdom, but not of Truth, as used here; that is definitely a Greek conception.

The excellent Greek of I Esdras also shows it is no mere translation but was composed in Greek, though with the use of the materials supplied in Hebrew by II Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

This fully explains the evidently Hebrew character of the parts of the book that are taken directly from the older Hebrew books. But there would be no possible point in copying these out in Hebrew, except to insert the Guardsmen story. But that is so evidently Greek and not Jewish in its ideas, that while its use might commend the Jewish portions of the book to Greeks it could not possibly recommend them to Hebrew-reading Jews. The idea that I Esdras is a translation of a Semitic work must be definitely abandoned.

As a historian, the writer of I Esdras leaves much to be desired, for he makes events of the second year of Darius—that is, 520 B.C.—follow events of the reign of Artaxerxes, which began in 465 B.C. As he tells the story, Cyrus authorizes the rebuilding of the Temple in 538 B.C.; but Artaxerxes has it interrupted, sometime after 465 B.C.; and then Darius orders it resumed, 520 B.C. It is evident that in paraphrasing the account in Ezra the writer skipped from the end of chapter 1 to the seventh verse of chapter 4, where the interruption of

the work on the Temple through the jealousy of the Samaritans is recorded as taking place in the reign of Artaxerxes; and then returned (5:7 ff.) to the narrative of Ezra 2:1, thereafter following it pretty faithfully to the end. Indeed it is its large use of the book of Ezra that has given I Esdras its name, for Esdras is the Greek form of Ezra. The author evidently made the account of the interruption of the rebuilding of the Temple appear to precede the reign of Darius in order to introduce dramatically the story of the Three Guardsmen.

The freedom with which the two sections of Ezra are transposed, and the seven chapters of Nehemiah omitted, shows that the book is to be viewed not as a history but almost as a piece of historical fiction. Its relation to its Old Testament sources can best be shown in a tabular view:

II Chronicles	I Esdras
35:1—36:21	1:1–58
Ezra	
1:1–11	2:1–15
4:7–24	2:16–30
	3:1—5:6 (The Three Guardsmen)
2:1—4:5, 24	5:7–73
5:1—10:44	6:1—9:36
Nehemiah	
7:73—8:12	9:37–55

The most famous line in I Esdras is from 4:41, "Truth is mighty and will prevail," a loose quota-

tion of unknown origin, but used by Thomas Brooks as early as 1662.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Read I Esdras through.
2. Is it intended as history?
3. What Old Testament sources did the writer use?
4. What Greek elements does the book contain?
5. What was its writer's purpose?
6. When and where was the book written?
7. What contemporary situation guided the writer to his theme?
8. In what language was the book written?
9. To what party did the writer belong?
10. Why was the book called Esdras?

CHAPTER VI

THE BOOK OF JUDITH

With Jerusalem recovered through the Maccabean struggle, and Judaism restored, a Jewish Puritan of the rising Pharisaic party wrote a novel. He wished to show the importance of observing the Jewish Law faithfully and in the fullest possible sense, at all times and places, for he believed that only by so doing could the nation escape the danger of again displeasing God and suffering punishment for it. So he told how his heroine Judith went through the most perilous adventures without ever relaxing her scrupulous observance of the Law in any particular, and in consequence was not only preserved but enabled to rescue her city and nation from great danger.

Judith was a beautiful Jewish widow who lived in the town of Bethulia (which may mean Shechem), not long after the return from the Exile. The forces of the Assyrian king, Nebuchadnezzar, are overrunning Palestine and the adjacent lands, and the Jews resist them and close their gates against them. Bethulia is besieged. The Assyrian commander Holofernes holds a council of war, to learn what this resistance means. Achior, the leader of his Ammonite allies, explains that the history

of the Jews shows that if they disobey their God they can be easily overcome, but as long as they obey him faithfully no one can subdue them. Holofernes is indignant and has him bound and left under the hill on which Bethulia was built. The people of the town find him and take him in. The Assyrians now seize the springs from which the town gets its water, and the Hebrews begin to suffer from thirst. They call upon the elders to surrender the city, and the elders at last agree to do so if rain does not come within five days.

At this point (8:1) Judith enters the story. She summons the elders to her house and rebukes them for putting the Lord to such a test. She hints darkly at a plan she has formed and tells them to let her leave the town with her maid that night. Then after a prayer for strength she dresses herself in her finest clothes, packs up some Jewish food, and with her maid passes out of the city gates. She makes her way to the Assyrian camp and to the tent of Holofernes. Taken into his presence she professes to be acting in his interests. She declares that the townspeople are asking the authorities in Jerusalem to permit them to eat the consecrated first fruits and tithes, and otherwise violate the Law, and if this permission is granted she will inform him, and he will find the Hebrews easy prey.

Holofernes is enamored of her and agrees to this plan. She is given a place in his tent, going out in

the night to bathe at the spring in the camp. She eats the "clean" food she had brought with her, and by her ablutions maintains her ceremonial purity. On the fourth day, Holofernes gives a feast, and instructs his chief eunuch Bagoas to persuade Judith to come and eat and drink with him, and join in the festivity. Judith joyfully agrees. She dresses herself beautifully and comes in, only refusing to eat anything but what her maid prepares for her. When the banquet is over, she is left in the tent with Holofernes, who has fallen into a drunken sleep. She takes his scimitar and cuts off his head. Then she and her maid leave the camp as usual, taking the head with them in the bag in which they had brought their provisions. They go to Bethulia and display the head to the townspeople. Achior recognizes it as the head of Holofernes, and becomes a convert to Judaism. Judith directs them to hang the head upon the city wall, and at daybreak to sally from the town to attack the Assyrians. They do so, and the Assyrians, left leaderless by the death of Holofernes, take to flight. The Israelites drive them out of the country, and despoil their camp. Holofernes' tent and its furniture are given to Judith. She sings a song of triumph, like Deborah of old. Judith gives Holofernes' dishes and his bed canopy to God. She lives to a great age, and no enemy dared to attack Israel as long as she lived or for long after.

This was the Pharisee's novel, awakening memories of Jael killing Sisera in his sleep, when the fleeing Canaanite general had taken refuge in her tent (Judg. 4:21). But all through the story of Judith runs the deep concern for the Law of food, and fasts, and washings, of tithes and first fruits. Even in the enemy's camp, and in the heathen general's tent, Judith does not forget the minutest requirements of the Law, and God remembers her, and through her brings a great deliverance to his distressed people.

Judith was written about the middle of the second century before Christ, perhaps in Hebrew, but if so, it was very soon translated into Greek. A latest possible date is perhaps indicated by the mention of Ashdod (2:28), which is known to have been desolated by Jonathan about 147 B.C.; it seems to have been still inhabited when Judith was written. It is noteworthy that the Old Testament quotations in the book follow the Greek (Septuagint) version, not the Hebrew text. The book is said to have been read at the annual feast of Hanukkah, which was established in Maccabean times, to celebrate the rededication of the Temple, and Judas' victory over the Syrian general Nicanor (II Macc. 15:35, 36). It is first quoted about A.D. 95, in Clement of Rome's Letter to the Corinthians (55:4, 5).

That Judith is a work of fiction is evident from the first line, in which we encounter Nebuchad-

nezzar reigning over the Assyrians in Nineveh. Of course Nebuchadnezzar was king not of Assyria but of Babylonia; Babylon, not Nineveh, was his capital. It was he who had carried the Jews into captivity, a fact one would think no Jew could forget. But the later Jewish writers were not always careful to distinguish Assyrians from Babylonians; II Chron. 33:11 describes the Assyrians as taking King Manasseh as a captive to Babylon. Arphaxad, spoken of here (1:1) as king of Media and builder of the walls of Ecbatana, appears in the Old Testament as the name of one of the ancestors of Abraham (Gen. 10:22); Herodotus says (*History* i. 98) that it was Deioces who built the walls of Ecbatana, in 700 B.C. The names of Holofernes and Bagoas recall those of participants in the Egyptian campaigns of Artaxerxes Ochus, 359–338 B.C. Bagoas fought in the campaign of 351 B.C., in which the Jews were also involved. The mention of the Persians and the Medes in Judith's song of triumph (16:10) confirms the impression that the wars of Ochus form part of the background of the Judith story.

So the book is more significant for the early ideals of Pharisaism than for the history of the times after the Exile. And among its Pharisaic traits are concern for the Temple and its tithes, which must in no circumstances be diverted from their sacred uses; for the food laws, prayer, fasting, and cere-

monial washing, along with the horror of idolatry. The readiness to employ cunning, deceit, and violence to further Jewish ideals, national and religious, must not be left out of this picture of early Pharisaism. There is more than a hint of future punishment in the close of Judith's song, which, while based upon the closing lines of Isa. 66:24, goes far beyond their meaning:

> The Lord Almighty will take vengeance on them
> in the day of judgment,
> To apply fire and worms to their bodies,
> And they will feel them and wail forever [16:17].

The story of Judith is on the whole well told, though the heroine is very slow in making her appearance; she is not mentioned until the beginning of the eighth chapter. The early part of the book is devoted to accounts of the plans and counsels of Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes, and their military operations in and around Palestine. Even these however are described with a good deal of animation and vigor. Certainly after Judith is introduced, the narrative does not languish. Her stratagem in getting into Holofernes' camp recalls that of the Persian Zopyrus, related by Herodotus (*History* iii. 153–58), who got into Babylon by a similar ruse, and later betrayed the city. The audacity of her exploit, especially in a Jewish woman, was sufficiently amazing, but it is the incongruity of her conscientious performance of her religious

duties with her ruthless murder of an unconscious man that gives to the story of Judith its peculiar quality. Clement of Rome summarized it, expressing his approval of "the blessed Judith," for her courage and patriotism (I Clem. 55:4, 5). But for the writer of Judith, her motive was more religious than patriotic, and the dramatic narrative is simply the vehicle for the message of Pharisaism.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Read the Book of Judith through.
2. Is it history, or fiction?
3. What Old Testament heroine does it recall?
4. To what party does the writer belong?
5. What lesson does he intend to teach?
6. When was the book written?
7. What moral or religious values does the book possess?
8. What moral defects does it show?
9. What historical weaknesses has the book?
10. What historical values does it possess?
11. What Pharisaic traits can you find in the book?
12. What is its literary value?

CHAPTER VII

THE PRAYER OF MANASSEH

The Prayer of Azariah was not the only great prayer of the Maccabean age. Another Jew of that period, probably out in the Greek world, in Egypt, gave moving expression to the same sense of guilt and penitence, in what is known as the Prayer of Manasseh.

Of all the kings of Judah, Manasseh had the longest reign. For fifty-five years, the writers of Kings and Chronicles agree (II Kings 21:1; II Chron. 33:1), he reigned in Jerusalem. This was much longer than the reign of either David or Solomon. It was also a very wicked reign. He rebuilt the high places, erected altars for Baal, worshiped all the host of heaven, caused his son to pass through the fire—that is, sacrificed him—practiced augury and witchcraft and appointed necromancers and wizards. He also shed much innocent blood in Jerusalem. The prophets declared that he had been more wicked even than the Amorites that went before him, and that God would cast his people off and wipe Jerusalem as clean as a dish (II Kings 21:11–15) because of him.

To the writer of Chronicles it seemed impossible

that a man so wicked as Manasseh should not have been overtaken on earth by the judgment of God, and II Chronicles goes so far as to declare that because of Manasseh's sins God brought the Assyrians upon him and they carried him away in chains to Babylon. It goes on to say that he repented and prayed to God so earnestly that God forgave him and restored him to his kingdom.

His prayer also, and how God was entreated by him, and all his sin and his guilt behold, they are written in the Records of the Seers [II Chron. 33:19].

There is not much in the Prayer at first sight to connect it specifically with Manasseh any more than with any other great sinner; yet it is given the name of Manasseh, and so it may have been written to supply such a prayer as II Chronicles declared he had written and was still extant. The mention of sins more numerous than the sands of the sea, multiplied transgressions, the multitude of his iniquities certainly suits the account of Manasseh's reign given in both Kings and Chronicles; his being weighed down with many an iron fetter recalls the picture in II Chronicles of his being taken to Babylon in chains; his setting-up of abominations suggests Manasseh's setting-up of an idol in the house of God; and the statement that all the host of heaven sings God's praise is curiously reminiscent of the statement in II Chron. 33:3 that Manasseh worshiped all the hosts of heaven; the author of

the Prayer is evidently giving that phrase a very different meaning.

Taking all this together, it seems probable that the Prayer was composed in Maccabean times to represent what one of the Chasidim, or Puritans, of that time believed would, or should, have been the emotions of the repentant Manasseh described in II Chronicles. The whole prayer reflects a belief in the willingness of God to forgive even the wickedest of men if he truly repents.

Certainly its great sense of guilt and the marked sincerity and simplicity of its appeal led the early church to identify it with the prayer of Manasseh mentioned in II Chronicles as uttered by that wicked king in his distress and repentance, in Babylon, toward the end of the seventh century before Christ. But no Hebrew form of it has ever been found; it occurs in two ancient Greek manuscripts among the collection of Songs added to the Book of Psalms; a number of Latin manuscripts of the thirteenth century have the Prayer at the end of II Chronicles. It did not appear in Coverdale's Bible of 1535. In the Geneva Bible of 1560 it followed II Chronicles. It was in the Matthew Bible of 1537, the Great Bible of 1539, the Bishops' Bible of 1568, and the King James Bible of 1611, in all four standing between the Story of Bel and the Dragon and the First Book of Maccabees; in the Bishops' in very small print, but in the

Great Bible and in King James in type the same size as the other books. The heading in the Great Bible reads: "The Prayer of Manasses Kyng of Juda, when he was holden captive in Babilon," and this is closely followed in the Bishops' and in King James.

The Books of Kings however give no support to the account of Manasseh's removal to Babylon or of his repentance there and subsequent restoration to his throne. Certainly the connection of the Prayer with the one ascribed to him in II Chronicles is altogether fanciful. It has however had the effect of preserving another fine and moving piece of Maccabean liturgy, worthy to stand beside the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Children.

The Prayer consists of three parts: acknowledgment of the greatness of God; confession of sin; and prayer for forgiveness. It begins by addressing God as the God of the upright Jews, the maker of the world, a God of anger and yet of mercy, who has ordained repentance for such sinners as the author of the prayer. His sins overwhelm him; he has no apology to offer; he acknowledges them fully, and asks for forgiveness. He prays that God will not be angry with him forever, and lay up evil for him, and condemn him to the lowest parts of the earth. The Lord is the God of those who repent, and will

save him in spite of his unworthiness. Then he will praise God continually as long as he lives,

> For all the host of heaven sing your praise,
> And yours is the glory forever. Amen.

The Prayer makes its first appearance in church use in the Didascalia, a manual of Christian behavior and of church procedure, written in Greek in the third century, in which the story of Manasseh's sin and repentance is told in language mostly drawn from II Kings, chapter 21, and II Chronicles, chapter 33, and the Prayer is quoted in full as an example of true repentance and its effect.[1] It was evidently adopted into the liturgical literature of the church about the middle of the third century after Christ. Its simplicity, deep feeling, and power give it genuine religious worth, and remind us of the genuine religious feeling that welled up in Jewish hearts in the first great days of the Maccabean era.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. References: *Apostolical Constitutions*, II, 22.
2. Read the Prayer of Manasseh.
3. What historical situation is it intended to reflect?
4. Is its religious value dependent on this?
5. When was it really written?
6. What Jewish group cultivated this deep sense of sin?
7. Does any New Testament writer give evidence of it?
8. Into what parts does the Prayer fall?
9. What is its religious message?

CHAPTER VIII

THE ENLARGED EDITION OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER

About 100 B.C. a pious Jew of Egypt, attracted by the romantic story of Esther, but horrified at its failure to see the hand of God in the deliverance it described, translated it into Greek and at the same time introduced into it the religious note it so much needed.

The Old Testament Book of Esther was written in Maccabean times, probably not far from 150 B.C., to encourage the observance of the newly instituted Feast of Purim. This was not so much a religious as a social celebration, which had originated among the Jews of Mesopotamia. On it, the Jews entertained one another at dinner, and exchanged presents. Esther seeks to show that it originated in the fifth century before Christ, to perpetuate the memory of a great deliverance of the Jews in the Persian Empire, when their enemies at the court of Xerxes tried to have them massacred, but the queen, a Jewish woman named Esther, interceded for them and saved them.

The Old Testament Esther is a bitterly nationalistic book, and exultingly records that the Jews,

so far from being massacred, were able to turn on their persecutors throughout the Persian Empire and destroy seventy-five thousand of them. There is in fact very little that is religious in it; it does not even mention the name of God. But when it passed into this Greek translation, as it did within half a century, it was enlarged by almost half its original size by a series of six additions. These introduce a strong religious element into the story; Mordecai and Esther utter long prayers, and Mordecai closes the book with a survey of its action from a very religious point of view, explaining Purim—which means "lots"—by the two lots God had made, one for the people of God and one for all the heathen (10:10). The additions also seek to explain obscurities in the original story, and introduce two long letters of Artaxerxes (meaning Xerxes): one supplying the decree mentioned in Esther 3:13–15; the other supplying that mentioned in 8:13, canceling the previous decree and exalting the God of the Jews.

These additions are usually grouped together in the English Apocrypha. Even Jerome picked them out and put them in a group at the end of Esther, in the Latin Vulgate. But of course they can be understood only if they are read as parts of the enlarged Book of Esther. They are:

I. The Dream of Mordecai. Mordecai has a dream. He is already a functionary at the Persian

court in Susa. His dream foreshadows the action of the story: he sees two dragons wrestling; the holy nation is in danger; they cry to God, and a little spring appears. It presently becomes a river and they are saved. This is the prelude.

Mordecai overhears a plot against the king; he reveals it, and the plotters are executed. The king honors Mordecai, but Haman, a man in high honor with the king, plans to injure him and his people.

[At this point the Old Testament Book of Esther begins. Xerxes makes a great feast, and summons his queen Vashti to show herself at it. She refuses, and he divorces her, and proclaims the fact, so that every man may be master in his own house. In the search for a new queen, Mordecai's ward, Esther, is chosen by the king, and becomes queen. Mordecai learns of a plot against the king's life and tells Esther, who warns the king, and the plotters are executed. Haman the king's favorite is offended at Mordecai for not bowing before him, and resolves to destroy the Jews. He poisons the king's mind against them, and the king issues an edict authorizing their destruction (Esther 1:1—3:13).]

II. The First Decree. The Greek version here quotes the decree, after Esther 3:13.

[Mordecai hears of it, and sends word to Esther to appeal to the king and save her people: "Who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther agrees: "I will go

to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish" (Esther 3:14—4:17).]

III. The Prayers of Mordecai and Esther. Here in the Greek version, Mordecai utters a very earnest prayer, pleading for his nation and excusing his refusal to bow before Haman, which had led to Haman's hostility. Esther too humbles herself and utters a fervent prayer for courage and success in her effort to save her people. She excuses her acceptance of heathen splendors and her relations with her heathen husband as repugnant to her but unavoidable in her position.

IV. Esther's Appearance before the King (taking the place of Esther 5:1, 2). When her fast is ended, she dresses herself magnificently and goes in all her beauty to the king. He is angry at her intrusion, and she faints away in terror. This alarms him, and he takes her in his arms and revives her.

[Esther invites the king and Haman to a banquet. Haman plans to hang Mordecai and prepares a gallows. The king is reminded of how Mordecai's warning had saved his life, and asks Haman how he can best show a man honor. Haman supposes he is himself the man to be honored and replies accordingly, but to his chagrin Mordecai is the man. The queen entertains the king and Haman at a second banquet. She exposes Haman's plot to destroy her and her people. The king orders his execution, and he is hung on the gallows he had prepared for

Mordecai. Mordecai becomes the king's favorite, in place of Haman. At Esther's request, the king cancels his decree ordering the destruction of the Jews (Esther 5:3—8:12).]

V. The Second Decree (following 8:12). Here the Greek version introduces the full text of the new decree, reciting the treasonable designs of Haman and authorizing the Jews to defend themselves when they are attacked.

[The Old Testament Book of Esther goes on to describe the relief of the Jews at their escape, and their successful resistance to those who attacked them; they killed seventy-five thousand of these. In commemoration of their deliverance, the Jews in Susa instituted the feast of Purim, which is interpreted to mean "lots." Mordecai became the king's prime minister. The Old Testament Book of Esther ends (8:13—10:3).]

VI. The Meaning of Mordecai's Dream (following 10:3). The Greek adds, after the close of the book, the interpretation of the Dream of Mordecai, which it had given at the beginning. Haman and Mordecai are the wrestling dragons, and Esther is the tiny spring that became a river. Israel's lot prevailed over the heathen's lot.

A curious postscript which concludes the Greek Esther states that the book ("the preceding letter of Purim") was brought to Egypt in the fourth year of Ptolemy and Cleopatra (probably meaning 114

B.C.) by Dositheus "who said he was a priest and a Levite" and by Ptolemy, his son. They certified the truth of its contents and said it had been translated by "Lysimachus, the son of Ptolemy, one of the residents of Jerusalem." The purpose of this postscript evidently is to further the influence of the book. The probable meaning of it is that Dositheus and his son Ptolemy brought the original Esther (considered as a letter of Mordecai) to Jerusalem in 114 B.C., and this Ptolemy's son, Lysimachus, later translated it into Greek, enlarging it as he did so. This would be somewhat like the origin of Ecclesiasticus; the grandfather wrote it, and his grandson translated it in Egypt. Here the grandfather imported the Hebrew Esther; and his grandson translated it. It would be natural to represent the translation as the work of a Jerusalemite, in order to enhance its authority, but the Greek version, including the additions, was undoubtedly made in Egypt, and probably not far from 100 B.C. Certainly the Greek translator enlarged the book as he translated it, giving it the religious tone and the historical documentation he felt were needed. It seems clear that what the postscript purports to say is that Dositheus and his son brought the Book of Esther to Jerusalem, where his grandson translated it into Greek. But what really happened was that some such men brought the book to Egypt and

there it was translated and enlarged, some time after 114 B.C. The purpose of the postscript is to claim the authority of Jerusalem for the enlarged Esther.

The Greek Esther was well known to Josephus, about A.D. 90, for he paraphrases most of the Greek form of it in *Antiquities* xi. 6. It was evidently known to Clement of Rome, who speaks of Esther as entreating the all-seeing Lord with her fasting and humiliation (55:6, cf. Esther 15:2), which goes beyond the statements of the Hebrew Esther, in which neither the all-seeing God nor prayer are ever mentioned. Clement of Alexandria refers to Esther's "perfect prayer to God" (*Stromateis* iv. 19). Origen says the Jews did not accept the Greek additions, but thinks they are fitted to edify the reader (*Letter to Africanus* iii). Yet the Jews in the Middle Ages (ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries) made use of parts of the Greek Esther.

It is not hard to understand why Egyptian Jews should feel that such a national deliverance as Esther described should be recognized as due to the favor and mercy of God, and that the want of any reference to God or prayer in the Old Testament Book of Esther should be supplied.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Read the Old Testament Book of Esther through.
2. What is the religious value of it?

3. Read the enlarged Esther through, fitting the insertions in where they belong.

4. How did the Greek Esther improve it?

5. When was the Old Testament Esther written?

6. When was the Greek enlarged edition produced?

7. What additions did it make to the book?

8. What was the purpose of the Old Testament Esther?

9. What was the purpose of the Greek edition of it?

10. Had it also a literary purpose?

CHAPTER IX

THE STORY OF SUSANNA

To secure a much-needed reform in Jewish legal procedure, a gifted Pharisee of Jerusalem early in the first century before Christ wrote a story. Not long after in a fuller form it was put into Greek in Egypt and added as an embellishment to the translation of Daniel, and finally it was made to form the introduction to the Greek translation of that book. It is hardly five pages long, but it became one of the great short stories of the world. It is the Story of Susanna. The first English Bibles—Coverdale, Matthew, the Great, and the Bishops'—called it a "Story"; but the King James version, following the Geneva Bible, dignified it as the History of Susanna.

The situation which moved the Hebrew story-teller was this. In the early years of the first century before Christ, there were two rival parties among the Jews of Judea. They were the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees incurred the anger of the Jewish king, Alexander Jannaeus, and he slaughtered thousands of them. The leader of the Pharisees was Simeon ben Shetach. The Sadducees, being in the ascendancy, through false witnesses had his son condemned to death, but before

he could be executed the witnesses confessed that they had testified falsely. Under the Law, which required only a life for a life, they could not be punished, as no one had suffered death through their action, and the Pharisees demanded an interpretation of the Law that would punish perjurers when they were found out, whether anyone had actually been put to death or not. It was to urge this reform in the Jewish law in the most moving manner possible, that the Story was first written.

Susanna was the beautiful wife of a leading Jew of Babylon, to whose house the Jewish elders and judges of the city constantly came. Two of these men became enamored of Susanna, and once when she went into her garden to bathe, surprised her and threatened to testify that they had found her in the arms of a lover, if she would not submit to them. Susanna repulsed their advances and cried for help. The elders shouted too, and protested that they had surprised her with a young man, but he had escaped. When she was brought to trial the next day, they told their story, and, though she protested her innocence, yet as there were two of them, and their testimony agreed, under the Jewish law she was convicted and sentenced to death.

As she was being led away to immediate execution, a young man named Daniel interrupted the proceedings by shouting that he would not join in stoning her to death, which had of course to be done

by the whole community (Lev. 24:14). He called them back to the place where she had been tried and there examined the two witnesses separately, asking each one under which tree in the garden he had found Susanna and her supposed lover together.

One said under a mastic tree, and Daniel sternly rejoined that the angel of God would certainly "masticate" him! (The Greek word means literally "cut him in two.") The other when he was questioned said under a live oak tree, and Daniel replied with a similar bitter play upon the name of the tree; the angel of God would saw him in two. Betrayed by their inconsistent answers, the guilty elders are promptly put to death, and Susanna is saved.

It was these plays upon words in Susanna that led Origen's friend Julius Africanus to write him that remarkable letter, about A.D. 240, protesting on a number of grounds against the acceptance of the Story as a part of Daniel; especially because the Greek plays upon words in the names of the trees marked the piece as a Greek composition. Africanus also pointed out the good Greek style of the Story, which he regarded as strange if the work was a translation from the Hebrew. Origen in his reply clung to his acceptance of the Story but acknowledged that the Jews he had questioned could not give him any Hebrew parallels for these particular plays upon words.

The fact evidently is that Susanna was written in Hebrew, but was paraphrased and enlarged in Greek, and combined with the Greek translation of the Book of Daniel. For it is one of the three additions to Daniel made by the Greek translators of that book, the others being the Song of the Three Children and Bel and the Dragon. Daniel had been written partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic, in the times of the Maccabean revolt, about 165 B.C., and when it passed into Greek perhaps a hundred years later the translator embellished it, and at the same time preserved these three short but valued pieces, by combining them with it.

So the Story of Susanna is a Greek elaboration of a shorter Hebrew narrative, long since lost, which lacked the bitter puns and probably the identification of Daniel as the young man who so successfully interfered on Susanna's behalf.

The makers of the Septuagint translation of Daniel probably in the first century before Christ put Susanna at the end of the book, along with Bel and the Dragon. But another translator, Theodotion, early in the second century after Christ, put Susanna at the very beginning of Daniel, making it serve as an account of Daniel's debut; it is as the rescuer of Susanna from an undeserved punishment that he makes his dramatic first appearance. And Theodotion's version of Daniel was so much preferred by the early church that the Septuagint

form of it was almost forgotten, and has survived in only a single Greek manuscript.

The Story of Susanna did not fail of its effect. When the Pharisees came into power in Judea after the death of Alexander Jannaeus in 76 B.C., they reorganized the Sanhedrin, and a more searching examination of the witnesses supporting an accusation came to be required. But the Story lived in Jewish circles only in vague memories of the wicked elders, who were identified with the false prophets, Ahab and Zedekiah, mentioned in Jer. 29:21–23.

In Christian circles, on the other hand, Susanna, as the first part of the Greek Book of Daniel, formed part of the Greek Bible of the early church. It was quoted by Irenaeus and Tertullian; Hippolytus allegorized it, Africanus challenged it, and Origen defended it. Jerome, in the Latin Vulgate, put it with Bel and the Dragon at the end of Daniel, following chapter 12. The English Church has a reading from it in November, and the Roman Catholic Church has one in Lent, and prays "Lord, free the soul of thy servant as thou didst free Susanna from a false charge."

The story recalls Tarquin and Lucrece in Roman legend, where Lucrece is put to a somewhat similar test. And the famous story of the adulterous woman introduced into the Gospel of John in the sixth century (John 7:53—8:11) reproduces many features of the story of Susanna; a woman accused of

the same crime and declared to have been taken in the act, condemned by the Law and evidently being led out to be stoned by a band of scribes and Pharisees, when a searching remark by a great teacher turns the tables on her accusers, and convicts them instead.

Susanna means lily, in Hebrew (Hos. 14:5). It was probably chosen by our author as a symbol of purity. It is never a proper name in the Old Testament, but appears in Luke 8:3 as the name of one of the women who provided for Jesus. It has assumed many modern forms, Susannah, Susanne, Susan, Susie, Sue. Shakespeare named one of his daughters Susanna.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Read the Story of Susanna.
2. What is its literary worth?
3. What is its deeper purpose?
4. What is its place in the prevalent Greek version of Daniel?
5. Where was the original story written?
6. What was the historical situation?
7. What changes did it undergo in passing into Greek?
8. From what Jewish party does it come?
9. Was its purpose humane?
10. What classical and New Testament parallels can you name?

CHAPTER X

BEL AND THE DRAGON

To save his fellow-Jews from falling into idolatry, a Jew of Alexandria, early in the first century before Christ, wrote the two short stories known to us as Bel and the Dragon.

Most of the Jews lived far from Jerusalem and the Temple, surrounded by heathen peoples and under the shadow of great pagan temples, where the worship of idols was carried on sometimes with the greatest pomp and splendor. In the world in which they lived, from the times of Alexander on, the universal tendency had been to adopt Greek or oriental customs, social and religious. The world was moving toward uniformity of life.

So in great centers like Babylon and Alexandria Jews were under great pressure to adopt the manners and worship of the country, and earnest and faithful Jews made repeated efforts to keep them from doing so. These stories represent one of these efforts. While they are meant to interest and delight the reader, their serious purpose is to warn him against idolatry by exposing its shams. They were probably written in Greek, to safeguard Jews

in Alexandria against the attractions of Egyptian idolatry.

Both stories have to do with Daniel and were probably written before the middle of the first century before Christ and added to the Book of Daniel by its Greek translator, and then re-written by Theodotion about the middle of the second century after Christ, when he retranslated Daniel from Aramaic and Hebrew into Greek. He put Susanna at the beginning of it, but followed the older Septuagint translation in leaving the Song of the Three Children after Dan. 3:23, and Bel and the Dragon at the very end.

Bel and the Dragon are really two separate stories, both written to ridicule idolatry. The first one is one of the oldest detective stories in the world. King Cyrus on coming to the Persian throne finds in Daniel his chief companion and friend. He asks him why he does not worship Bel, and points out how much flour and oil and how many sheep that deity consumes every day. Daniel persuades him to deposit the usual amount in the temple and then to close and seal the temple doors. But Daniel first takes the precaution of scattering ashes over the temple floor.

When they return in the morning, the food is gone, but Daniel is able to show the king that the floor is covered with the footprints of the priests

and their wives and children, who have come in in the night by a secret entrance under the table, and consumed the provisions. The king is convinced, the priests are slain, and the temple is destroyed.

The Dragon is another story of the same kind. It is not a dragon at all, but a serpent, which the king worships, like the serpents venerated at Greek and oriental shrines, such as that of Aesculapius at Epidaurus. Daniel denies its divinity and kills it by feeding it lumps of pitch, fat, and hair. The Babylonians are furious at the destruction of their divinity, and declare that the king has become a Jew. They demand that Daniel be put to death. The king reluctantly consents and Daniel is thrown into the lions' den. The lions are given nothing else to eat, but they do not molest Daniel (this repeats the story of Dan. 6:1–28). Daniel himself is miraculously fed by the prophet Habakkuk who is caught up by an angel in Judea as he is taking some reapers their dinner, and brought to the lions' den in Babylon. He gives Daniel the food and is immediately returned to his home in Judea again.

Daniel remains in the den with the lions for six days. On the seventh the king comes to mourn for him, and sees him sitting there alive. He glorifies the God of Daniel and lifts him out of the den. Daniel's enemies are thrown into it and immediately devoured.

The stories were both suggested by narratives in Daniel: the gold idol (chap. 3) and the lions' den (chap. 6). The name Dragon for the second story is taken from the Greek and Latin words for serpent, *drakon* and *draco*. Some scholars connect the serpent with the monster Tiamat of Babylonian mythology, slain by Marduk, but it is unnecessary to seek so far. Alexander the Great was said to have found huge serpents venerated in India, and the *Apology* of Aristides in the middle of the second century after Christ declares that the Egyptians still worship "serpents and asps." The serpent worship connected with the shrine of Aesculapius at Epidaurus has been mentioned.

There is little that can be called historical about either tale, and the angel catching up Habakkuk by the hair of his head and conveying him to Babylon with the speed of the wind is a crowning imaginative touch. These tales are pieces of Jewish fiction and belong with Tobit, Judith, and Susanna, to which they are of course decidedly inferior.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Read Bel and the Dragon.
2. What is the story of Bel?
3. What is the purpose of it?
4. What name do we give stories of this kind now?
5. What is the story of the Dragon?
6. What traces of serpent worship have we from ancient times?

7. What literary indebtedness to the Book of Daniel does the story show?

8. What other pieces of fiction have we found in the Apocrypha?

9. What other attacks upon idolatry do they contain? (See chaps. 13 and 14.)

10. For Old Testament polemics against idolatry, see Isa. 44:9–20 and Jer. 10:1–16.

CHAPTER XI

THE FIRST BOOK OF MACCABEES

Less than a hundred years before the birth of Christ, a Sadducean admirer of the Maccabees wrote in Jerusalem, in Hebrew, the story of the three great brothers—Judas, Jonathan, and Simon —who had freed Judea from her Syrian oppressors and restored her worship. He was not a Pharisee, or Puritan, but belonged to the other branch of the Maccabean supporters, the Hasmoneans, the patriotic party who fought for more than religious liberty; they aspired to political liberation. And this the Maccabean brothers had nobly won, at the cost of their own lives, for Judas and Eleazar had died in battle, and Jonathan and Simon were treacherously murdered.

He wrote in the days of the Sadducean ascendancy under Alexander Jannaeus, the grandson of Simon, 103–76 B.C., after full political independence had at last been secured, when a Sadducee would naturally be moved to record the deeds of the three great brothers to whom his world owed so much.

While the book opens with a general paragraph on Alexander's conquests, its narrative really begins with the accession of Antiochus Epiphanes as king of Syria in 175 B.C. and the emergence of a

hellenizing party in Jerusalem, which welcomed and adopted heathen practices. Antiochus embarked upon a policy of compelling the Jews to accept Greek civilization, and a series of clashes with faithful Jews resulted, culminating after the desecration of the Temple in the outbreak of revolt under Mattathias and his sons at the town of Modin, when they killed the king's officer and fled to the mountains.

Judas is the hero of the period that follows (3:1—9:22); with small bodies of men he defeats one Syrian commander after another; and carries on such a spirited campaign against the Syrian forces sent against him that just three years after its desecration the Temple is recovered (1:59; 4:52), the altar rededicated, and the Jewish worship there resumed. Judas punishes outlying foes of the Jews but has to contend with hellenizing forces among the Jews as well as with his Syrian foes. He sends ambassadors to Rome, to make friends with the Romans. This and his evident political aims led the Puritans—the Chasidim, the Pharisees of later days who wanted only religious liberty—to desert his cause. He met the Syrian commander, Bacchides, with an inferior force and was defeated and killed, in 160 B.C.

His brother Jonathan succeeded him as leader of the Jewish cause, 160–142 B.C. (I Macc. 9:23—12:53). His generalship and diplomacy extended

the borders of his country. A new king of Syria appointed him high priest. But he was finally trapped in Ptolemais by his Syrian enemies and put to death.

He was followed by his brother Simon, the third of the three great Maccabean brothers (142–135 B.C.), who carried Jewish resistance to Syria on until practical political independence was achieved. He dislodged the Syrian garrison from the citadel of Jerusalem, cultivated foreign alliances, and practically made the Sadducees' dream of political independence come true. But he, like Jonathan, lost his life through treachery, being murdered at a banquet given in his honor near Jericho. His son John Hyrcanus succeeded him in the high priesthood, which now united the civil, military, and religious leadership of the Jewish people.

Such a heroic story might well attract a Sadducee living in times of Sadducean leadership in the days of Alexander Jannaeus, Simon's grandson, and he tells it with enthusiasm indeed, but without much exaggeration. Heaven he felt was on the side of the three brothers, or they were on heaven's side, but there was nothing miraculous about it all. There are no angelic appearances in the book. The Law is sacred, but it was unwise to carry the observance of the Sabbath to the extreme of not resisting armed force on that day. Judas and his men were wiser when they said, "If anyone attacks us on the Sab-

bath day, let us fight against him and not all die, as our brothers died in the hiding places [2:41]."

The date of the writing of I Maccabees is pretty definitely fixed by its closing statement, that the rest of the acts of John and his wars and the exploits that he performed, and the building of the walls that he effected, and his deeds, are written in the chronicles of his high priesthood. This sounds as though John's reign was over and the writer was writing early in the reign of his son, Alexander Jannaeus, who became king in 103 B.C. The book was probably written in the early years of the first century before Christ, therefore, and very soon made its way to Alexandria and was translated into Greek, undergoing some expansion in the process.

It is a curious fact that the writer of I Maccabees never mentions the name of God, but this is perhaps only a mark of his extreme reverence for the divine name. Certainly, he is by no means irreligious; the reader feels that he believes in God and in his participation in the deliverance of his people. In fact Judas says to his men at one crisis in the struggle, "He himself will crush them before us, and you must not be afraid of them [3:22]." On another occasion, when hard pressed,

they called aloud to heaven,

"What are we to do to these men [the Nazarites], and where can we take them, when your sanctuary is trodden

down and profaned, and your priests are grieved and humiliated? Here the heathen are gathered together against us to destroy us; you know their designs against us. How can we make a stand before them unless you help us [3:50–53]?"

It is evident that the only thing lacking in this prayer is the name of God. Immediately after, Judas says, as he prepares for battle, "But he will do just as shall be the will of heaven [3:60]." He seems sometimes to be using the name Heaven in the sense of God. So in 4:10, Judas says, "So now let us cry to heaven, if perhaps he will accept us, and remember his agreement with our forefathers, and crush this camp before us today. Then all the heathen will know that there is one who ransoms and preserves Israel." Later on, when he faces a fresh Syrian army, he prays, "Blessed are you, Savior of Israel, who stopped the rush of the champion by the hand of your slave David. In like manner shut up this camp in the hand of your people Israel [4:30, 31; cf. 7:41]." Even the priests (7:37) pray to God without mentioning his name.

Jonathan too calls on his men to "cry out to heaven that you may be delivered from the hands of our enemies [9:46]." It was evidently a part of the writer's religion to revere the name of God too much to utter it.

His religious position is also reflected in his avoidance of the miraculous or marvelous, his sincere

concern for the Law, rather than for any Pharisaic refinements of it, and his interest in the Temple and the priesthood. The scope of his narrative also reveals the range of his interest, for he does not stop when religious freedom has been achieved under Judas (9:22), but pursues the story until, under Simon, Judea is politically liberated as well.

Of the dozen or more state papers—letters, decrees, and proclamations—preserved in the book, some letters to Rome and to Sparta, in so far as they are genuine at all, belong to later dates than are here given them, while the decrees of the Syrian kings may have been inserted in the book by the hand of the Greek translator from the history of Jason of Cyrene mentioned in II Macc. 2:23, for Jason's five-volume history was written in Greek. The purpose of their inclusion by any hand was of course to enhance the importance of the Maccabean enterprise in the eyes of the reader.

While Jerome in his *Prologus Galeatus* declares that he has seen a Hebrew copy of I Maccabees, it was only the Greek translation of it that survived or had any literary influence. It was probably in its Greek form that it was used by Josephus (*Antiquities*, xii and xiii), and it was in that translation that it from the first formed part of the Greek Bible of the early church. Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus in Rome, Origen, and Eusebius all know it as part of the Bible. I Maccabees is included in most

of the leading manuscripts of the Greek Bible—the Alexandrian, the Sinaitic, and the Venetus—but not in the Vatican codex. With II Maccabees it is included in the Clermont list of books of scripture, representing the practice of Egypt about A.D. 300. Both books passed into the Latin Bible, and so into the use of the medieval church, and into all the early German and English Bibles, Catholic and Protestant.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Read I Maccabees.
2. What dramatic story does it tell?
3. To what Jewish party did its writer belong?
4. What features of his book support this impression?
5. To what point does the writer trace the history?
6. What Jewish aims had been achieved by that time?
7. What is the writer's attitude to God?
8. When did he write his book?
9. Why should he have written the story then?
10. What happened to the four Maccabean brothers?
11. What kingdom did they have to contend with?
12. Was there a Jewish group that favored the adoption of Greek culture?
13. What practice of the writer makes his book of especial value to the historian? (Cf. 1:10, 20, 54; 2:70, etc.)

CHAPTER XII

THE SECOND BOOK OF MACCABEES

II Maccabees is not a sequel to I Maccabees, but a parallel account of the Maccabean struggle. A Pharisee of Alexandria, possessed of a five-volume work on the subject by one Jason of Cyrene, and dissatisfied with the cold Sadducean character of I Maccabees, undertook to summarize Jason's book and tell from the Pharisaic point of view what caused the Maccabean uprising and how God enabled his people under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus to triumph over his enemies. We have seen how the Greek translator of Esther felt it necessary to remedy that book's failure to mention the name of God, by inserting long religious passages in it, and it is not strange that in a time of great tension between Pharisees and Sadducees, so Sadducean an account as I Maccabees would lead a Pharisee to retell the story in the Pharisaic vocabulary.

And Pharisaic the vocabulary certainly is. Miracle, angels, martyrdom, resurrection, feasts, Law, Sabbath are points of interest and emphasis for the Pharisaic writer. How far these also marked the history by Jason which he is epitomizing we cannot be sure, but our writer, while he summarizes

some of Jason's narrative most abruptly, dwells fondly upon these.

The scope of his story is also significant; he stops with Judas' victory over Nicanor and the Feast of Nicanor, instituted in memory of it. Judas himself was killed a few months later, but that he does not mention. Judas is the only figure among the Maccabeans that interests him; of the work of Jonathan and Simon, his successors, he has nothing to say. For it was under them and Simon's son John that the Sadducean dream of political independence was realized, and the Sadducees gained the ascendancy. Their work would not interest a Pharisee. For him Judas was the true and only hero of the great struggle, and its significant result was the restoration of the Temple and the Law, celebrated in the festival of Hanukkah, or Dedication.

The narrative of II Maccabees indeed is organized about these celebrations. It begins with two letters from the Jews of Palestine to the Jews of Egypt, urging them to keep the festival of Dedication. The writer wants to have the Jews of Egypt as well as of Palestine observe it. He declares his intention of writing an epitome of the history of Jason of Cyrene, a work of which nothing else is known. He begins with the sacrilegious attempt of Heliodorus, acting for the king of Syria, to rob the Temple of the money deposited in it, when he was struck down and beaten by angels. The high priest

is ousted and murdered; first one and then another obtains the office by bribery. Antiochus Epiphanes enters Jerusalem, killing fabulous numbers of the people. He robs and profanes the Temple, and tortures and kills those who will not give up the Jewish religion. Some Pharisaic martyrdoms—those of Eleazar and the seven brothers—are related in horrible detail. Judas Maccabeus now rallies his countrymen (8:1) and defeats the Syrian generals; King Antiochus who is away in Persia hears of it and starts back to punish the Jews, but dies a horrible death on the way, repenting of his wickedness before the end. Judas and his men recover Jerusalem and rededicate the Temple, instituting the festival of Dedication (10:1–8).

Judas continues his victories, sometimes aided by heavenly horsemen and portents. In a final struggle with Nicanor he defeats him again, and Nicanor is killed. Judas cuts off his head and arm and displays them before the Temple Nicanor had threatened to destroy. The Jews vote to celebrate the day ever after, with the festival of Nicanor's Day (15:36). As the city remained in Jewish hands from that time on, there seems to be nothing more to be said, and the writer concludes his account (15:37–39).

How much of this the writer obtained from Jason's history we cannot tell; some of it is almost certainly his own elaboration or insertion. But the full

treatment of some events side by side with the mere listing of others (14:25) gives the impression of an unskilled and uneven epitomist. The writer's style is elaborate and stilted, his attitude is bitter and partisan, he revels in horrible details of disease and torture. He is extravagantly fond of the supernatural, and his efforts at fine writing, his homiletical observations (such as 6:12–17), and his lack of restraint defeat the purposes of his book. His martyrs are all clearly Pharisees, and he represents the Chasidim, the Puritan party, as the only real supporters of Judas (14:6). In effect, he claims Judas as the leader of the Chasidim—the Pharisees—and disowns his politically minded successors.

II Macc. 4:7—15:36 deals with the period covered by I Macc. 1:10—7:50 (175–160 B.C.). The book leaves off before the death of Judas, and says nothing at all about the work of Jonathan and Simon; in fact it barely mentions their names (8:22), telling elsewhere how it was Simon's men who were covetous and took bribes from the Idumeans in a beleaguered fort and let some of them escape (10:19, 20)—a palpable slur upon the founder of the Hasmonean line.

The history by Jason of Cyrene on which the writer bases his book is said in 2:19–23 to cover the story of Judas Maccabeus and his brothers, down to the recovery of the Temple, the liberation of the

city, and the restoration of the laws. It was probably written toward 100 B.C. or not long after that date.

II Maccabees itself evidently rests upon I Maccabees as well as upon Jason's book, and its strong Pharisaic color makes it altogether probable that it was in part a counterblast to I Maccabees, with its pronounced Sadducean attitude. If I Maccabees was written early in the first century before Christ—the times of Jannaeus, 103–76 B.C.—and in a few years was brought to Alexandria and translated into Greek, it would be natural for a Pharisee soon to seek to offset its picture by re-writing the story from the Pharisaic point of view, for which the history of Jason of Cyrene would give him sufficient material. It would be a natural product of the resurgence of the Pharisees in the early years of Alexandra's regency, which began in 76 B.C. On the other hand, if Pompey's capture of Jerusalem in 63 B.C. had already taken place, even a Pharisee could hardly quote or invent the friendly Roman letter to the Jewish people that appears in 11:34–38. II Maccabees was probably written between 76 and 63 B.C. although its date cannot be determined with certainty. But the closing statement that the city has been held by the Hebrews from that time (the time of Judas Maccabeus) would be impossible

after Pompey in 63 B.C. besieged and captured the city and entered the Holy of Holies.

II Maccabees was written in Alexandria, and it was known to Philo, who died about A.D. 45. Josephus also may have known it and used it in his *Antiquities;* it was certainly used by the author of Hebrews in the last decade of the first century (Heb. 11:35–37):

> Women had their dead restored to them by resurrection. Others endured torture, and refused to accept release, that they might rise again to the better life. Still others had to endure taunts and blows, and even fetters and prison. They were stoned to death, they were tortured to death, they were sawed in two, they were killed with the sword.

The reference to the martyrs of II Macc. 6:29 and chapter 7 is unmistakable.

Every historian chiefly records himself, and it is of great interest and importance that we possess in I and II Maccabees these self-portraits of Sadducee and Pharisee from the first half of the last century before Christ.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Read II Maccabees.
2. What story does it tell?
3. To what party did its writer belong?
4. What larger history is he abbreviating?
5. Does it continue I Maccabees, or overlap it?
6. What characteristic traits of his party does the writer show? Compare Acts 23:8.

7. What other books from members of his party have we found in the Apocrypha?

8. What is the literary quality of the book?

9. What is its moral tone?

10. When and where was II Maccabees written?

11. Who is the hero of II Maccabees?

12. What is its closing scene?

CHAPTER XIII

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

About forty years after the birth of Christ a Jewish sage of Alexandria wrote his Wisdom. Like the author of Ecclesiastes he wrote in the name of Solomon, the greatest sage of all, who above everything else asked Wisdom of God (I Kings 3:5–14):

> Give me the wisdom that sits by your throne, ...
> You have chosen me out to be king of your people, ...
> You told me to build a sanctuary on your holy mountain,
> And an altar in the city where you dwell, ... [9:4, 7, 8].

> Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given me;
> I called, and the spirit of wisdom came to me.
> I preferred her to scepters and thrones,
> And I thought wealth of no account compared with her [7:7, 8].

The writer's purpose was to protect the Jews in Egypt from the danger of falling into skepticism, materialism, and idolatry, and of yielding to the pressure of persecution to which they had evidently been exposed. In Alexandria the Jews found themselves surrounded with a triumphant idolatry; its great temple, the Serapeum, was said to be, after the Roman Capitol, the grandest structure of its time. The Museum with its library and its scholars gave to intellectual pursuits the most marked

recognition they had ever received. The city was a center of the great movement to make Greek language and Greek culture universal, and the Jews themselves had gone so far as to translate their literature into Greek, for the benefit of Jews in the West who had lost their Hebrew, and to induce Greek readers to accept Judaism. In Alexandria Jews were even writing new books in Greek—Tobit, I Esdras, Susanna, II Maccabees.

But they must not go too far. They must not let this great Greek current sweep them away altogether from their ancient moorings. The Epicurean attitude that colors so much of Ecclesiastes must not control them. The horizon of the soul is not limited by this present world; they must look beyond.

It was particularly important to say this when the Jews of Alexandria were suffering or had recently suffered from a persecution, probably the popular attack upon the Jews of Alexandria precipitated by the visit to that city of the young Jewish prince Agrippa, upon whom the new emperor Gaius had just conferred the title of king, to the great annoyance of the Alexandrians. Not long after, in A.D. 40, Gaius demanded divine honors, and the efforts of the Alexandrians to force the Jews to comply with this demand, and worship his image, led to new excesses. The Jews at last sent an embassy to Gaius, Philo himself being a member

of it and reporting its experiences with the mad emperor, in his *Embassy to Gaius*.

It was to encourage the Jews of the city to maintain the faith of their fathers in the face of the first of these attacks that the first part of Wisdom was written, probably early in the reign of Gaius, or soon after. It had a message of comfort and cheer for the faithful; death itself must not daunt them. The ungodly men say of the upright man,

> "Let us test him with insults and torture,
> So that we may learn his patience,
> And prove his forbearance.
> Let us condemn him to a shameful death,
> For he will be watched over, from what he says
> [2:19, 20]!"

But

> The souls of the upright are in the hand of God,
> And no torment can reach them [3:1].

> An upright man, if he dies before his time, will be at rest,
> For an honored old age does not depend on length of time,
> And is not measured by the number of one's years, ...
> Being perfected in a little while he has fulfilled long years,
> For his soul pleased the Lord;
> Therefore he hurried from the midst of wickedness [4:7–14].

With this the writer combines solemn warnings to apostate Jews against the Epicurean tendencies for which some passages in Ecclesiastes gave so much color. In fact, Wisdom seems sometimes to be definitely correcting passages in Ecclesiastes, and

putting its teaching into the mouths of those whom Wisdom calls the wicked (2:4; cf. Eccles. 1:11). Certainly Ecclesiastes, no doubt in its Greek translation, is often before the mind of the writer of Wisdom, who does not hesitate to answer it and correct its darker reflections.

To comfort and encouragement in persecution and to denunciation of apostasy must be added the note of warning against idolatry which pervades so much of the book. The emphasis laid upon this matter and the particular mention of the deification of kings, makes it very likely that the efforts of the Alexandrians to force the Jews to worship the image of Gaius are fresh in the writer's mind in the second part of the book:

> By the orders of monarchs carved images were worshipped.
> And when men could not honor them in their presence, because they lived far away,
> They imagined how they looked, far away,
> And made a visible image of the king they honored.

He goes on to tell how the people

> Now regarded as an object of worship the one whom they had recently honored as a man [14:16–20].

The book is plainly the work of two hands, one leaving off at 11:4 and the other, who is far behind the first in simplicity and spontaneity, continuing from 11:5 to the end. The second writer develops

to the utmost the idea that God used the very things that benefited his people to punish their enemies. But he carries this out so elaborately and so revels and delights in its intricacies that the reader's interest and patience are exhausted. Indeed it has been well said that the writer's ideas and vocabulary have both given out long before the end. His vocabulary is particularly artificial; he likes to use the rarest words he can find, and feebly strains to achieve fine writing. The two parts of the book exhibit a strong contrast in literary quality, and all the favorable things that have been said of the Greek of the book rest upon the early part of it.

It would seem that the author of Wisdom 1:1—11:4 wrote after the persecution of A.D. 38, when Flaccus the Roman governor allowed the rights of the Jews as residents, and in some cases at least as citizens, of Alexandria, to be disregarded. The second part (11:5—19:22), which reflects Gaius' subsequent demand for worship in A.D. 40, was probably written not long after that date. It naturally has a great deal to say about idolatry.

After a few words in praise of justice and wisdom, the writer contrasts the ungodly persecutors of the upright with the men they persecuted, showing the shallowness of the materialistic and Epicurean way of life:

"Let us enjoy the good things that exist, ...
Let us have our fill of costly wine and perfumes, ...

Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they wither;
Let us oppress the upright poor;
Let us lie in wait for the upright, for he inconveniences us
And opposes our doings,
And reproaches us with our transgressions of the Law,
Let us condemn him to a shameful death [2:6–12, 20]!"

But

God created man for immortality,
And made him the image of his own eternity [2:23].

The souls of the upright are in the hand of God,
And no torment can reach them.
They are at peace.
For though in the sight of men they are punished,
Their hope is full of immortality [3:1, 3, 4].

Their persecutors will some day realize their mistake:

"This is the man we fools once laughed at
And made a byword of reproach.
We thought his life was madness,
And his end dishonored.
How did he come to be reckoned among the sons of God,
And why is his lot among the saints [5:4, 5]?"

In a splendid passage, reflected half a century later in Ephesians, the writer describes God as the champion and avenger of his people (5:15–23). He renews his contention that Wisdom is necessary to monarchs (chap. 6). Then speaking in the char-

acter of Solomon, the greatest of the Sages (chaps. 7–9), he professes his passionate devotion to Wisdom. It has been pointed out that while in chapters 1–6 Wisdom is sometimes personified, in chapters 7–10 it becomes almost a substitute for God himself, while in the rest of the book (chaps. 11–19) it is no more than practical godliness. The doctrine of Wisdom reaches its peak in chapter 7:

> She is the breath of the power of God,
> And a pure emanation of his almighty glory; . . .
> For she is a reflection of the everlasting light,
> And a spotless mirror of the activity of God,
> And a likeness of his goodness [7:25, 26].

Solomon's prayer (chap. 9) shows what a great king should think of Wisdom.

The writer traces the guiding hand of Wisdom in the history of the patriarchs and the chosen people (chap. 10) until Moses in the wilderness struck the rock and gave them water (11:4).

Here the second hand takes the pen. He labors the point that in the punishment of the Egyptians the things that blessed the Hebrews were used to torment their persecutors. The Hebrews found the water from the rock refreshing and life giving; the Egyptians found the water of the Nile turned to blood! A long polemic against idolatry is interwoven with this.

This strong and even painful contrast between the two parts of the book cannot be explained away

by the theory of an editor gathering his materials from here and there. For while one can imagine a man so insensible to literary and religious values as to write the latter part of the book, to imagine another man so equally insensible as to incorporate these unskilled meanderings into a book like Wisdom, doubles the difficulty of the problem. When he must be supposed to have added such stuff to such a book as Wisdom 1:1—11:4 would have been, he is at once revealed as incapable of having written or even edited Wisdom 1:1—11:4.

The natural explanation of Wisdom is that someone vaguely aware of the values people seemed to find in the original Wisdom, and wishing to secure circulation for his peculiar theological hobby, attached it to the earlier work, writing it up as nearly in the style of that book as he knew how. Without his excruciating addition, Wisdom would stand out as a little gem of Alexandrian Jewish literature.

Not only the Greek version of Ecclesiastes but also that of Proverbs was well known to the writer of Wisdom, probably also to its continuator. The author was also familiar with Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, and had some slight knowledge of Platonic philosophy, though far less than his Alexandrian contemporary, Philo.

There is good reason to think that Paul knew the Book of Wisdom; he quotes it in Col. 1:15 and seems to show acquaintance with it in Romans. The

author of Ephesians evidently knew it (Eph. 6:13–17), and the writer to the Hebrews quotes it in his opening lines, applying its words to Christ as the embodiment of the divine Wisdom: "Through whom he had made the world. He is the reflection of God's glory, and the representation of his being, and bears up the universe by his mighty word [Heb. 1:2, 3]."

The apparent identification of the divine Wisdom and the divine Word in Wisdom (9:1, 2) probably influenced the Fourth Evangelist to take the momentous step of identifying Jesus not only with the divine Wisdom as Paul and Hebrews had done, but with the divine Word (John 1:1). So significant was the influence of the Apocrypha in the development of Christian thought.

Thus from the beginning the Book of Wisdom influenced Christian thought, partly because its account of Wisdom invited comparison with Christ and partly for its emphasis upon immortality.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Read the Wisdom of Solomon.
2. Why was it called by his name?
3. To what type of Jewish literature does it belong?
4. What is its purpose?
5. What situations does it reflect?
6. Where was it written?
7. What earlier books of the same type does it show acquaintance with?

8. Into what parts does it fall?

9. What is the main argument of each?

10. What different senses attach to the word "wisdom" in the different parts of the book?

11. What is the first writer's attitude toward Ecclesiastes?

12. What contribution did the book make to Christology?

13. What New Testament writers made use of it?

14. What literary contrast does the book present?

CHAPTER XIV

THE BOOK OF BARUCH

The dreadful experiences of the Jews in the siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70 made a deep impression upon the Jews not only of Palestine but of Egypt and the West. The despair that must have first possessed them at the catastrophe gradually gave way to a mood of resignation and even of hope. In such a spirit a Jew, probably in Egypt about the end of the first century after Christ, wrote the Book of Baruch, to interpret the misfortune that had overtaken his people and to find the silver lining in the dark cloud, very much as the old prophets had dealt with the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the Jews so long before.

He wrote in Greek, though he may have used older Hebrew materials in the earlier parts of the book (1:1—3:8 and 3:9—4:4); but it is by no means certain whether these parts ever circulated in writing before their combination in our Book of Baruch, and their extreme brevity makes it unlikely. Certainly there is no trace or record of their earlier circulation or existence in writing except as it may be deduced from a study of them as they now appear in Baruch.

The book represents itself as written by Baruch,

the friend and secretary of Jeremiah (Jer. 32:12, 16, etc.) in Babylon, in the fifth year after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, which would be 582 B.C., and as sent to Jerusalem with a sum of money, to help support the worship there, though how this could be done with the priests gone and the Temple in ruins is by no means clear. Still it is not impossible, as the visit of pilgrims reported in Jer. 41:5 shows. The group still lingering in the ruined city is told to pray for Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and his son Belshazzar, meaning obviously Vespasian and his son Titus, or Domitian.[1] Bygones are to be bygones, and the Jews are not to seek revenge, but to live under the shadow of the emperors and serve them and find favor in their sight. That the Jews of that period needed such counsel is clear from the Bar-Cochba outbreak against Rome some thirty years later, A.D. 132–35. The Book of Baruch seeks to instil an attitude of loyalty to the Empire, which some Jews could not bring themselves to feel.

The book, small as it is, consists of three parts. The most of part 1 is a prayer of penitence, recognizing in what has befallen them the just punishment of their sins, and reinforcing the plea for becoming law-abiding and loyal subjects of the Empire. This prayer of confession the Jews are to read on festival days and days of assembly. It is a piece of liturgy, in the spirit of the prophets.

This prose section (1:1—3:8) is followed by a poem in praise of Wisdom (3:9—4:4), in which Israel's misfortunes are explained, from the Sage's point of view, as due to her neglect of Wisdom. The poet seeks to recall his people to the divine Wisdom which had been intrusted to them:

> Blessed are we, Israel,
> Because we know the things that please God [4:4].

But he blends this Wisdom with the Law:

> This is the book of the commandments of God,
> And the Law that will endure forever.
> Come back, Jacob, and take hold of it;
> Approach the radiance from her light.
> Do not give your glory to another,
> And your benefits to an alien people [4:1–3].

The third part of the book (4:5—5:9) is also poetry; it is a message of comfort and hope for the distressed Jews. They had been delivered to the heathen because they had angered God. Jerusalem their mother speaks to them, in words reminiscent of the dirges of Lamentations (4:9–29), urging them to repent,

> For he who has brought these calamities upon you
> Will bring you everlasting joy with your deliverance.

Spirited messages of hope and restoration, in the style of the later chapters of Isaiah, follow (4:30—5:9). Destruction will overtake Israel's enemy, who

has brought her so low, and the children of Jerusalem will be brought back to her in triumph.

This third part seems to breathe a different spirit from the first one, which was so conciliatory and counseled adjustment to the imperial yoke, but it is not wholly inconsistent with it; the nation's triumph is to be left to God to accomplish.

Historical considerations did not weigh much with the writer of Baruch: Belshazzar was not the son of Nebuchadnezzar, as he calls him, but of Nabonidus; Baruch's mistake is due to Dan. 5:2, 11, 13, 18, 22, where it also appears. The use of Daniel is of importance however, for Daniel was written about 165 B.C., and so it is plain that the Book of Baruch was certainly not written in 582 B.C., as the first lines declare. The first and third parts clearly belong to the last part of the first century, and there is nothing in the second part inconsistent with this; Israel has grown old in a strange land, and a younger generation has settled on the earth, which has not learned the way to knowledge. The note of resignation and of hope is in all three parts, different as they are in color. An indomitable faith in God characterizes the whole book, and gives it unity, although the three parts may come from different hands. All three reflect the same Jewish disposition, a generation after the fall of the city before the Romans, to adjust themselves to the new conditions, acknowledge the

justice of God, believe in Israel's supreme religious heritage, and look forward to the day when their own land would be restored to them.

In the Greek version of the Old Testament Baruch was early added to Jeremiah, and so came to be quoted as Jeremiah by Christian writers like Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. *References:* The movement to make Vespasian emperor really began in Alexandria, when the governor of Egypt had his soldiers swear allegiance to Vespasian.
2. Read the Book of Baruch.
3. What situation does it purport to reflect?
4. Who was Baruch?
5. When was the Book really written?
6. What historical situation does it actually reflect?
7. What advice does it give to the Jews in their distress?
8. What reason have we to think they needed such advice?
9. Into what parts does the Book fall?
10. What is the distinctive character of each?
11. What religious value does the Book possess?
12. Where did it stand in the Greek version of the Old Testament?

CHAPTER XV

THE LETTER OF JEREMIAH

Late in the first century after Christ, a Jew of Alexandria wrote a tract to ridicule idolatry, and as Jeremiah had done the same thing so effectively in Jer. 10:1–16, he wrote it under Jeremiah's name. Jeremiah had written a letter to the exiles in Babylon (Jer. 29:1–23) and that suggested the literary pattern. The Letter usually appears as the sixth chapter of Baruch.

Never was idolatry more splendid and overwhelming than in Alexandria. It found expression as we have seen in the magnificent temple of Serapis, said to have been the most splendid building in the world, after the Capitol in Rome. Visitors from Upper Egypt still went to it to pray in the third century after Christ, feeling that the prayers they uttered went up, as one of them said, "with far greater force in the great Serapeum" (Oxyrhynchus Papyri, 1070).

Jewish residents might well need a fresh warning against idolatry in Alexandria, in the latter part of the first century, when their own Temple had been destroyed and their Temple ritual had ceased. The vocabulary is that of apocalyptic, in which Nebu-

chadnezzar means Vespasian, as it does in Baruch, and Babylon means Rome, as it does in Baruch, the Revelation, I Peter, and II Esdras.

The writer warns his readers that they will remain in Babylon for many years—"seven generations," a long but indefinite period of time—a clear evidence that he is using Babylon in a symbolic sense, meaning the Roman Empire, as the writer of Baruch does (Bar. 2:21). There they will see a great deal of idolatry, but they must not fall into it. The angel of God is with them, and will care for them (vss. 1–7).

The idols are dressed in fine clothes, and have scepters and axes in their hands, but they cannot use them, even to defend themselves. The refrain, "They are not gods, so you must not stand in awe of them," concludes the paragraph (vss. 8–16).

They have to be locked up at night to protect them from robbers. Decay, vermin, and smoke spoil them and their clothes, and bats, birds, and cats perch upon them. They are not gods, so you must not stand in awe of them (vss. 17–23).

They have to be carried about, and picked up if they tip over. All that is offered to them goes to the priests; none of it goes to the poor or helpless. Their sacrifices are not kept ceremonially clean. So they are not gods; you must not stand in awe of them (vss. 24–29).

Women set their tables, and their priests howl

and shout before them. They cannot do anything for their worshipers. So why should anyone think them gods, or call them so (vss. 30–40)?

Their worshipers really mock them by asking them to do what they cannot do. Women devotees (of Aphrodite) offer themselves to the passers-by, and are proud of being desired. So why should anyone think them gods, or call them so (vss. 6:40*b*–44)?

They are just as the craftsmen make them. They cannot protect themselves in war or disaster; the priests have to hide them. Who then can be ignorant that they are not gods (vss. 45–52)?

Idols can do nothing. If the temple catches fire, they burn up like the timbers around them. Why then should anyone believe or suppose that they are gods (vss. 53–56)?

They cannot defend themselves against robbers. A king, or a mere dish, or a post is of more use than they are; the sun, moon, and stars shine, and winds blow, but these idols settle nothing and help nobody. So as you know they are not gods, you must not stand in awe of them (vss. 57–65).

They cannot hurt or help, or even shine like the sun or moon. The wild animals are better off, for they can at least take care of themselves. It is plain they are not gods; you must not stand in awe of them (vss. 66–69).

They are as useless as a scarecrow in a cucumber

patch. They are like a bush the birds light on. From the rotting of the clothes they wear, you can tell they are not gods. An upright man who has no idols is far better (vss. 70–73).

The materials of the Letter are miscellaneous and unorganized, except for the recurring refrains (vss. 16, 23, 29, 40, 44, 52, 56, 65, 69). Something like these refrains occurs in the *Apology* of Aristides, toward the middle of the second century, and the Letter probably influenced both it and the so-called Preaching of Peter on which it was based. The Letter shows the use not only of earlier polemics against idolatry like Jer. 10:1–16 and Isa. 44:9–20, but of that in the latter part of the Book of Wisdom,[1] which was written soon after A.D. 40.

While modern scholars have declared that the Letter was composed in Hebrew, there is hardly a single really Jewish touch in it, after the first paragraph, and the older opinion that it was written in Greek is much more likely. For one thing, its use of Herodotus is practically certain; the highly apocryphal story of the universal prostitution of Babylonian women can have no other source.[2] Indeed, the story as it stands in the Letter (vs. 43) has nothing to do with idols; it requires the context in Herodotus to connect it with idolatry (Aphrodite worship) at all. The writer evidently overlooked the fact that he had left that out. This passage really

shows how far the writer lived from Babylon, and how little he knew about it.

The reference to carrying idols in procession (vs. 26) does not indicate a Babylonian background for the Letter; the Egyptians, too, carried their idols in religious processions.[3] The statue of Serapis that Ptolemy Soter, according to Plutarch, brought to Alexandria and set up there, had a scepter in its hand, as the Letter says one idol has (vs. 14).

While the Letter appears in the later Greek manuscripts, in the Latin Vulgate, and in the English Bible as chapter 6 of the Book of Baruch, in the oldest Greek manuscripts it stands by itself with the title of the Letter of Jeremiah, immediately following the Book of Baruch. It is so inferior in style and thought to Baruch that it cannot have belonged to it. But it did exert some influence upon early Christian attacks upon idolatry, as its reflections in the Preaching of Peter and the *Apology* of Aristides show.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. *References:* [1]Compare vss. 34–37 with Wisdom 13:14–19; [2]Herodotus *History* i. 196, 198, 199; [3]Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, II, 357.
2. Read the Letter of Jeremiah.
3. To what period does it belong?
4. Why was it given Jeremiah's name?
5. What is its main idea?

6. What is its religious value?

7. What is its literary value?

8. Where was it written?

9. In what language was it written?

10. What other books in the Apocrypha deal with the subject of the Letter?

11. What influence did it have?

12. How did it come to be attached to the Book of Baruch?

CHAPTER XVI

THE SECOND BOOK OF ESDRAS

Not long after the middle of the third century after Christ, a Greek Christian, stirred by the apparent collapse of the eastern part of the Roman Empire, took a collection of Jewish apocalypses, or revelations, and added to it a conclusion, exulting over Rome because punishment was at last beginning to overtake it. A few years before, under Decius, the church had suffered a cruel persecution, but Decius himself was defeated and killed by the Goths, in A.D. 251. Other disasters followed for the Empire. The new king of Persia plundered the city of Antioch and defeated the emperor Valerian at Edessa in A.D. 260 and took him prisoner. He even began to invade Asia Minor, but was eventually driven back to his own borders by the prince of Palmyra, in A.D. 263–65. After the death of that prince in A.D. 267, his widow, the renowned Zenobia, took possession of Egypt—A.D. 270—but was immediately driven out again by the Romans.

It might well seem to a Christian in the East in the years 260–70 that the Roman Empire was at last beginning to break down, and that the punishment it deserved for its persecutions of the church was at hand.

Apocalyptic was the language of persecution, and in such times men turned back to it and wrote in it. The man who finished II Esdras did both. "The days of persecution are here, and I will deliver you from them," wrote the Christian apocalyptist who finished it (16:74). "In the midst of these disasters be like strangers in the earth [16:40]."

This is the key to the exultant cry of chapters 15 and 16: Alas for Babylon (that is, Rome), and Egypt, Asia, and Syria (16:1)! The last three were quite literally being ravaged or threatened by oriental armies from Persia or Palmyra. The Empire was no longer the invincible force it had been so long. "And you, Asia, partner of the beauty of Babylon Alas for you [15:46]!" It might well seem that God was calling together all the kings of the earth—Goths, Persians, Palmyrenes—to requite the persecuting Empire. The eastern part of the Roman world was out of control, and the writer saw in these amazing disasters the judgment of God upon the Empire.

The book to which he attached this conclusion, between A.D. 260 and 270, had already received a Christian preface (chaps. 1 and 2), perhaps a century before. In that preface the writer declared that the kingdom formerly promised to the Jews was to be given to the church. This idea, which appears in the Gospel of Matthew (21:43), also colors Justin's *Dialogue*, about A.D. 160. These chapters

make use of the language of the gospels, and their dependence upon the Apocalypse of Zephaniah shows they were written after the middle of the second century. Their Christian color is very plain. Ezra says to the angel,

"Who is that young man, who puts the crowns on them, and the palms in their hands?"[1]

He answered and said to me,

"He is the Son of God, whom they confessed in the world [2:46, 47]."

The writer of the preface is well aware that he is appropriating a Jewish work to Christian purposes: "Thus speaks the Lord to Ezra: Tell my people that I will give them the kingdom of Jerusalem which I was going to give to Israel. I will give to these the everlasting dwellings which I had prepared for those others [2:10, 11]." Ezra has offered the divine message to Israel, but they have refused it. "Therefore I say to you, heathen, who hear and understand, expect your shepherd [2:34]."

The older Jewish book of revelations was evidently adopted and labeled as a Christian work by the writing of this preface, before the end of the second century. Christian writers adopted and revised the Jewish Sibylline Oracles in the same way.

While the beginning and end of the book are Christian, the whole middle part of it (chaps. 3–14), is of Jewish origin, and consists of seven visions,

written at various times in the latter part of the first century or very early in the second. It falls into four parts.

The first is the so-called Ezra Apocalypse (chaps. 3–10) written, probably in Hebrew, about A.D. 100, in which Ezra asks God to explain certain theological problems which were then very much discussed among the rabbis. As the date of it is described as thirty years after the destruction of the city (3:1), it may be definitely dated in A.D. 100, since the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is clearly meant.

The Ezra Apocalypse falls into four visions.

In the first (3:1—5:19) the seer, who calls himself Salathiel as well as Ezra, asks God why Israel should be punished while Rome, which is so much more wicked, should be allowed to prosper. Uriel is sent to him to remind him that God's ways are beyond man's comprehension. Ezra also asks when the number of the upright will be made up, and Uriel indicates that it will not be long.

In the second (5:20—6:34), the seer asks why God, after choosing Israel, has given him up to his enemies. Uriel gives much the same answer as before, and they talk of the signs of the end.

In the third vision (6:35—9:25) the seer claims God's preference of Israel, and his scorn of all other peoples, and again asks why God has abandoned Israel. He also asks why so few are to be saved

and whether the punishment of the departed takes place immediately or is postponed. Ezra thinks the faithfulness of the remnant should be considered. He also appeals to the divine mercy. God answers, "You are far from able to love what I have created more than I [8:47]."

In the fourth vision (9:26—10:59) a mourning woman appears who turns into the city of Zion. The angel explains the vision to Ezra.

To the Ezra Apocalypse were afterward added three further visions (chaps. 11–14), which may be called visions five, six, and seven, though they are not from the same hand as visions one to four.

The fifth (chaps. 11, 12) is the Eagle Vision. The seer sees a gigantic eagle, with three heads and many wings, reigning over the whole earth, when a lion comes roaring out of the forest and pronounces its doom. The lion is the Messiah, the eagle is the Roman Empire, and the date is in the reign of Domitian—A.D. 81–96.

The sixth vision (chap. 13) is the Vision of the Man from the Sea. A man rises from the sea, and when a great multitude gathers to oppose him, he destroys them with his fiery breath. The lost Ten Tribes, which have been hidden in the fastnesses of a remote region beyond Assyria, reappear and become his people. He is the pre-existent Messiah and as God speaks of him as his son, the vision has a strongly Christian tinge. The chapter was written

about the time of the outbreak of the Jewish War, A.D. 66.

The seventh vision is the Writing of the Books (chap. 14). God speaks to Ezra out of a bush and tells him to gather five rapid writers and the necessary writing materials. Ezra does so and after drinking a fiery draught is inspired to dictate to them for forty days. In forty days ninety-four books were written. Ezra was told to publish twenty-four (the Old Testament scriptures as the Jews counted them); but to keep the seventy that were written last, to hand down to the wise men among his people. It was evidently written in the early years of the second century.

The oriental versions—Syriac, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Armenian—which preserve a better text than the Latin for the Ezra Apocalypse and for the additional chapters 11–14, here conclude with the statement that Ezra was caught up and taken to the land of those who were like him. These versions contain chapters 3–14 only.

The Christian conclusion (chaps. 15, 16) has been shown above to belong to the years following the Decian persecution, probably A.D. 260–70. It exults over the disasters that are overtaking the Roman arms in the east.

The several parts of the book thus arose in the following order: I, the sixth vision, the Man from the Sea (chap. 13), dating from the time of the out-

break of the Jewish War, A.D. 66; II, the fifth vision, the Eagle and the Lion (chaps. 11 and 12), dating from the reign of Domitian, A.D. 81–96; III, the Ezra Apocalypse (chaps. 3–10), written about A.D. 100; IV, the seventh vision, the Writing of the Books (chap. 14), written soon after A.D. 100; V, the Christian introduction (chaps. 1 and 2), written soon after A.D. 150; and VI, the Christian conclusion (chaps. 15 and 16), written between A.D. 260 and 270.

The Ezra Apocalypse itself (chaps. 3–10) must have gone through a series of forms. Written probably in Hebrew about A.D. 100, it soon took on, by the middle of the second century, the addition of three more visions, of earlier or later date (chaps. 11–14). In this expanded form it passed into Greek and thence into the oriental versions mentioned above. Still later, probably toward the end of the second century, it received the Christian introduction (chaps. 1 and 2), and almost a century after was completed by the addition of the Christian conclusion showing that the divine judgment was at last beginning to overtake the Roman Empire. A Greek parchment leaf from this latest part (15:57–59), dating from the fourth century, was found at Oxyrhynchus, and published among the Oxyrhynchus Papyri in 1910.[2]

A large part of II Esdras (the Ezra Apocalypse) was evidently written in Hebrew, but the opening

and closing sections are of Greek origin and considered as a whole the book was first put together in Greek, the Hebrew part having been earlier translated into Greek. Of the Hebrew form nothing remains, and of the Greek only the few verses in the Oxyrhynchus parchment leaf. The Ezra Apocalypse section, including chapters 11 to 14, was evidently put into Greek before the chapters that now precede and follow it were added to it, for all the oriental versions rest upon a Greek form of chapters 3 to 14, but lack chapters 1 and 2 and 15 and 16. The bracketed verse numbers in 7:[36–105] mark the portion missing in the Latin version, discovered by Bensly in a Latin manuscript at Amiens and published in 1875.

The only complete form of II Esdras is a very careless and inaccurate Latin text, long ago translated from the Greek. As it appears in the Latin Vulgate as IV Esdras, chapters 1 and 2 and chapters 15 and 16 are sometimes called V and VI Esdras by modern scholars. In the Vulgate the Book of Ezra is called I Esdras; Nehemiah, II Esdras; our I Esdras, III Esdras; and our II Esdras, IV Esdras. The earliest English Bibles followed this terminology, the Coverdale, the Great, and the Bishops' Bibles separating III and IV from I and II and putting them with the Apocrypha. In the Geneva Bible of 1560, however, I and II Esdras were called Ezra and Nehemiah, and III and IV became I and

II. This course was followed in the King James Version, in 1611. But in the Septuagint Greek version of the Old Testament, I Esdras is our I Esdras, and II Esdras consists of what we know as Ezra and Nehemiah.

Until it is understood as a series of short apocalypses from various times, II Esdras may well confuse and bewilder the reader, as it did Luther, who is said to have declared that he threw it into the Elbe.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. *References:* [1]Cf. Rev. 2:10; 7:9; [2]Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Vol. VII, No. 1010.
2. With this outline in mind, read II Esdras.
3. How would you describe it?
4. What are its chief characteristics?
5. What Christian parts are there in it?
6. Describe the remaining portions.
7. From what times does it come?
8. What historical situations do its various parts reflect?
9. Why did Christian writers adopt Jewish apocalypses as their own?
10. What is the apocalyptic name for Rome?
11. In what situations did Jews and Christians turn to apocalyptic?
12. What apocalyptic writings appear in the Old and New Testaments?

CHAPTER XVII

THE APOCRYPHA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Apocrypha are not only of great importance for the history of Judaism in the last two centuries before and the first century after Christ; they give us important help in understanding the writers of the New Testament.

If we pass directly from the reading of the Old Testament to the reading of the New, we are immediately conscious that we are in a very different world, not only politically but also religiously and spiritually too. The Temple worship is at its grandest, in Herod's splendid new Temple, which was not yet finished. The religious interest of the time is divided between two new groups, the Pharisees—men of the scribal type, who rallied about the synagogue, and dealt elaborately with the Law—and the Sadducees—the priesthood, who controlled the Temple and its concessions. The scribes in the Exile had found a way by which the Jewish religion could survive the deportation of their people and the destruction of the Temple and its worship, and it was their tradition, carried on through the Pharisees, that chiefly colored Judaism as it ap-

pears in the New Testament. Whence came these groups? The Apocrypha help us to understand.

No group is more in evidence in the New Testament than the Pharisees, and the Apocrypha show us that vigorous sect from its very infancy. They were the saints—the Chasidim—of the Maccabean era, and Paul, himself a former Pharisee, transferred that title to the Christian brotherhood; he spoke of them as the saints. We see their strivings after a better legal procedure in the story of Susanna, their insistence upon ceremonial observances, ablutions, fasts, feasts, and food they considered clean, in Judith; their heroism in persecution in the tales of the Maccabean martyrs. But most interesting of all are the two self-portraits which these two Jewish sects have left us, unaltered by hostile hands, in I and II Maccabees. For I Maccabees tells the story of the Maccabean brothers from the point of view of a Sadducee, and II Maccabees tells the story of Judas Maccabeus from the standpoint of a Pharisee. Like most historians they chiefly reflect themselves, and these reflections are of the utmost value for comparison with the pictures of the two parties in the New Testament.

In the earliest gospels we find ourselves moreover in an atmosphere of angels and demons, which is in strong contrast with the Old Testament. The Book of Tobit gives us the key to this mystery, for in it we see these elements of Persian religion pass-

ing into Judaism. The revival of the marvelous in II Maccabees helps us to see how natural this way of telling a religious story was in the first century before Christ, particularly in circles close to Pharisaism.

In short, the Apocrypha introduce us to the dramatis personae of the New Testament—Pharisees and Sadducees, angels and demons, saints and sinners—as well as to the social, political, and religious situation into which Christianity came, and the theological ideas that prevailed.

But how did the Apocrypha affect the writers and even the actors—the leading figures—of the New Testament itself? How far were they known to Jesus or Paul, or to Luke or John?

When Jesus describes the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16–20), one is reminded of the picture of Sirach 11:18 f.:

> One man grows rich by carefulness and greed,
> And this will be his reward:
> When he says, "Now I can rest,
> And enjoy my goods,"
> He does not know when the time will come
> When he will die and leave them to others.

So the man in the parable says,

"Soul, you have great wealth stored up for years to come. Now take your ease; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself!" But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your soul will be demanded of you. Then who will have all you have prepared?" That is the way with the man who lays up money for himself, and is not rich with God.

The Sadducees with their crude question about the woman who had married seven times and had no children, reminds us of Sarah and her seven husbands, in Tobit; and the disconsolate demon, cast out and homeless, wandering through waterless places recalls Asmodeus banished to the remotest parts of upper Egypt. Of the four archangels of later Judaism, Raphael and Uriel appear in the Apocrypha, Gabriel and Michael in the New Testament. The angelology and demonology of Tobit are part of the background of the gospels.

Tobit's emphasis upon charity, prayer, and fasting as the three forms of uprightness—an ideal of character that appears again in the Wisdom of Sirach—is reflected and sharply criticized in the Sermon on the Mount: "When you give to charity, ... When you pray, ... When you fast, ..."

The pious action of Joseph of Arimathea in asking Pilate for the body of Jesus in order to give it decent burial, vividly recalls the behavior of Tobit in giving honorable burial to the Jewish victims of the king that he found lying dead about the streets and bazaars of Nineveh. It was in fact directly because of this that Tobit was forced to fly from Nineveh, for his life. The story of Tobit lays great stress not only on ceremonial purity but on this Jewish duty of burying the dead of their own people, especially those cruelly slain by the government. The Jewish practice required burial,[1] but

the Romans would have left the body to decay where it hung, as bodies were left hanging in chains in the Middle Ages in England and Europe. Yet it was obviously no particular duty of Joseph to bury Jesus, except as very pious Jews took the burial of strangers and the victims of the government upon themselves as especial acts of righteousness. Joseph may have done this often. The purchase of a burial ground for strangers (Matt. 27:7) is a further expression of the same attitude.

The story of the adulterous woman brought before Jesus is really no part of the Gospel of John, but a sixth-century addition, taken over from the Old Latin version. Eusebius seems to have known it as part of the Gospel of the Hebrews. We cannot fail to note its resemblance to the story of Susanna, charged with the same crime, and represented by her accusers as taken in the very act. The scribes and Pharisees brought her to Jesus, saying she ought to be stoned, just as the wicked elders were taking Susanna out to be stoned. Jesus convicts the accusing Jews of being sinful themselves, just as Daniel convicts the two accusing elders of themselves being the guilty ones. Like Susanna, the woman goes free. A striking parallel runs through both stories.

The story in Luke of the Unjust Judge (18:2–8) is a sort of penumbra of a saying in Sirach 35:12–15:

> For the Lord is a judge,
> And there is no partiality with him.

He will not disregard the supplication of the orphan,
Or the widow, if she pours out her story.
Do not the widow's tears run down her cheeks,
While she utters her complaint against the man who
has caused them to fall?

The parable in Luke runs:

There was once in a city a judge who had no fear of God and respect for men. There was a widow in the city, and she came to him and said, "Protect me from my opponent." And he would not for a time, but afterward he said to himself, "Though I have no fear of God nor respect for men, yet because this widow bothers me, I will protect her, so that she may not finally wear me out with her coming."

The parable sounds very much as though it was based upon this passage in Sirach.

Jesus' instructions about behavior at a supper, and not assuming that you are the guest of honor, and seizing the best place, which may be intended for someone else (Luke 14:1–24), immediately recalls very similar precepts in the Wisdom of Sirach, chapters 31 and 32, about polite behavior at such large dinners, which the Jews evidently liked to give and to attend (cf. Matt. 23:6).

Again and again in the reported teachings of Jesus, we seem to hear echoes of the Wisdom of Sirach, which must have been well known either to him or to the evangelist, or to both. This is especially true in Luke, whose use of the names Susanna (8:3) and Zaccheus (19:2; cf. II Macc. 10:19) is a further hint of acquaintance with some of the Apocrypha.

The festival of Dedication mentioned in John 10:22 is no Old Testament feast, but the new Maccabean celebration of the rededication of the Temple, instituted in I Macc. 4:59 and in II Macc. 10:8, to commemorate the purification of the Temple and the re-erection of the altar.

The Letter of James owes much to the Wisdom of Sirach. Both repudiate the idea that God ever tempts anyone or leads him astray (James 1:13; cf. Sirach 15:11, 12). The third chapter of James, especially, shows the writer's familiarity with Sirach's Wisdom, indeed it speaks of Wisdom, good or bad, three times in the last paragraph.

The influence of the Wisdom of Solomon upon the letters of Paul, especially Romans, is so very marked that it has been thought Paul must have read or reread it not long before he wrote Romans. The intensely personal way in which the divine Wisdom is described in the Apocrypha, prepares us in some degree for Paul's bold identification of Jesus with that wisdom, in Col. 1:15: "He is the likeness of the unseen God, born before any creature, for it was through him that everything was created"—just the thought of the Book of Wisdom about Wisdom itself, where the same word for "likeness" is employed:

> For she is a reflection of the everlasting light,
> And a spotless mirror of the activity of God,
> And a likeness of his goodness [7:26].

Paul sees in Jesus the embodiment of the Wisdom of God, already personified in the Apocrypha. The same idea is carried a little farther, still under the influence of Wisdom, in the Letter to the Hebrews, where the famous words

> He is the reflection of God's glory,
> And the representation of his being,
> And bears up the universe by his mighty word

reproduce the same description of Wisdom in the Book of Wisdom (7:26). The writer of Hebrews, like Paul before him, understands Jesus to be the impersonation or embodiment of the divine Wisdom. And finally it was the apparent equating of the divine Wisdom and the divine Word in Wisdom 9:1, 2,

> Who created all things by your word,
> And by your wisdom formed man,

that influenced the writer of the Gospel of John to identify both the divine Word and the divine Wisdom with Jesus, in the opening words of the great prologue: "In the beginning the Word existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was divine. Everything came into existence through him. So the Word became flesh and blood and lived for a while among us, abounding in blessing and truth."

So it is the Apocrypha rather than the Old Testament that prepare us for the Christologies of the

New. The use of Wisd. 5:17–20 combined with Isa. 59:17 in Eph. 6:13–17, in building up the figure of the Christian soldier and his weapons, is unmistakable: "You must take God's armor, ... the belt of truth, ... uprightness as your coat of mail, ... faith for your shield, ... salvation for your helmet, and for your sword the Spirit, which is the voice of God."

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews with its list of the heroes of faith, is clearly influenced by the praise of famous men of Israel, in the Wisdom of Sirach, chapters 44–50. Verse 35 refers to the sufferings and hopes of resurrection of the Maccabean martyrs of II Maccabees, chapter 7. The words "put foreign armies to flight," may be an allusion to Judith's routing of the army of Holofernes. The climax of the chapter in Hebrews undoubtedly refers to the Maccabean persecution so much dwelt upon in II Maccabees:

> Still others had to endure taunts and blows, and even fetters and prison. They were stoned to death, they were tortured to death, they were sawed in two, they were killed with the sword. Clothed in the skins of sheep or goats, they were driven from place to place, destitute, persecuted, misused—men of whom the world was not worthy wandering in deserts, mountains, caves and holes in the ground [11:36–38].

Some readers of the Revelation cannot believe that Babylon there means Rome, until they find it

used in that sense in Baruch, the Letter of Jeremiah, and II Esdras. Tobit's dream of a day when Jerusalem would be rebuilt of sapphire and emerald, with walls of precious stones, and towers and battlements of pure gold, and streets paved with beryl, ruby, and stones of Ophir (Tob. 13:16, 17) must have been in the mind of the writer of the Revelation when he described the New Jerusalem as a city of pure gold, with a street of gold, and walls of jasper, sapphire, emerald, beryl, and all kinds of precious stones (Rev. 21:18–21).

Origen and Jerome both held that the writers of the New Testament knew and used the Apocrypha, and we have seen how in the gospels, the letters, and the Revelation, the direct influence of the Apocrypha is easily traced. They formed part of the literary background of the first age of Christianity and helped to enrich its thought, its preaching, and its writing. Of course Christianity greatly elevated some of this material, and some of it it disdained; but some it appropriated to its own ends.

Scholars sometimes speak as though religion in the Bible moved evenly onward and upward to its culmination in Christ, but they have forgotten the Apocrypha. In some of them, religion sank for a time to a very low level, until it offered but a dark background for the dawn of Christianity. Consider the last page of the Apocrypha, the fifteenth chap-

ter of II Maccabees, a recognized product of Pharisaism half a century before Christ. Judas has just defeated the Syrian general Nicanor, and Nicanor has been slain. Judas triumphantly carries his head and arm to Jerusalem to hang them up in triumph before the sanctuary, and declares his intention of cutting out Nicanor's tongue and feeding it in little pieces to the birds. So the curtain falls on the Apocrypha.

How different is the voice of the gospels! "You have heard that they were told, 'You must love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies, and pray for your persecutors, so that you may show yourselves true sons of your Father in heaven."[2]

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. *References:* [1]Deut. 21:22, 23; [2]Matt. 5:43-45.
2. What light do the Apocrypha throw upon the Pharisees?
3. What book throws light upon the Sadducees?
4. What book throws light on the matter of angels and demons in the New Testament?
5. What book most influenced New Testament Christology?
6. What book seems to have influenced the parables in Luke?
7. What precedent do the Apocrypha afford for the action of Joseph of Arimathea?
8. What interpolation in the Gospel of John reminds us of Susanna?

9. What was the festival of Dedication, mentioned in John?

10. What scenes in the Apocrypha does Hebrews reflect?

11. In how many New Testament books can you trace the influence of the Apocrypha?

12. Contrast the Pharisaic ethics of II Maccabees with those of the gospels.

13. What light do the Apocrypha throw upon Matthew, chap. 23?

CHAPTER XVIII

THE APOCRYPHA IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Early Christian writers give abundant evidence of their acquaintance with the Apocrypha and their respect for them. Clement and Hermas, Polycarp and Barnabas, contemporary with the later writers of the New Testament itself, reflect their use, and the greater figures that followed—Irenaeus of Lyons, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and Cyprian of Carthage, Hippolytus of Rome, and Origen and Dionysius of Alexandria—all knew them. For the Apocrypha were not then a definite collection of books standing apart and thought of together; they were scattered through the Greek Old Testament, and were thought of as parts of it.

The earliest Christian writing outside the New Testament that has come down to us is the Letter of Clement, written in the name of the church at Rome to the church at Corinth, about A.D. 95. He ranks Judith with Esther, and says of her, "The blessed Judith, when her city was besieged, asked the elders to let her go out into the camp of the aliens. So she exposed herself to danger, and went out, for love of her country and her people who

were besieged; and the Lord delivered Holofernes into a woman's hand [55:4]."

Twenty years later, Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, quoted to the Philippians some of Tobit's great words about charity: "Charity saves from death." Tobit's advice to his son about giving to charity is very sound and specific—we still hear it quoted sometimes in church, when the collection is taken: "Do not let your eye begrudge what you give to charity. Give to charity in proportion to what you have; if you have little do not be afraid to give sparingly to charity, ... for charity will save you from death [4:6–10; 12:9; Polycarp 10:2]."

The Letter of Barnabas (12:1), fifteen years later, quotes the Ezra Apocalypse in II Esdras (4:33; 5:5) as one of the prophets. With Baruch appended to Jeremiah, it was natural to quote it as coming from him. Athenagoras of Athens who wrote a Plea for the Christians to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, about A.D. 180, quotes the fine saying of Baruch, "He is our God; no other can be compared with him," as inspired words, and Irenaeus about the same time and Clement of Alexandria soon after quote passages in Baruch as the words of Jeremiah.

The Book of Wisdom actually appears as a book of the New Testament in the earliest list of New Testament books we possess, that of the Muratorian fragment, originally composed about A.D. 200

and representing the practice of the church at Rome. The book is spoken of as the "Wisdom composed by the friends of Solomon in his honor." Nothing could more eloquently express the regard felt for it in Christian circles than this impulse to include it in the New Testament itself. We have seen how it molded the earliest Christian thought about Christ.

Hippolytus included Susanna as part of Daniel among his commentaries on the scriptures. His opening observation is quaintly interesting: "What is narrated here happened at a later time although it is placed at the beginning of the book. For it was a custom with the writers to narrate many things in an inverted order in their writings"—a custom, we may add, that they have never outgrown. Susanna formed the subject of an interesting correspondence ten years later (A.D. 240) between two of the greatest Christian scholars of their day—Origen and Julius Africanus—the latter contending on the basis of the Greek puns in the story that it must have been written in Greek and not in Hebrew. Origen stoutly maintained its genuineness, going on to talk of Tobit and Judith, which he accepted without question as scripture.

The paintings of the Catacombs reflect familiarity with the scenes and subjects of the Apocrypha. But eastern Christianity began in the fourth century to regard them with less esteem, although the

great Greek Bibles written in the East, probably in Egypt and Caesarea, in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries still included them. In the seventh century the East swung back to them, however, and in modern times, in the seventeenth century, limited its list of Apocrypha to Tobit, Judith, Ecclesiasticus, and Wisdom.

It was Jerome as we have seen who first pointed out their absence from the Hebrew Bible of Palestine, and named them Apocrypha, but he left them in his Vulgate version, which became the Bible of western Europe. Luther took Jerome's point so seriously as to separate the Apocrypha from the rest of the Old Testament and group them together following it, in his German Bible of 1534, and Coverdale followed his example in the English Bibles of 1535 and 1539. In fact all the Protestant Bibles long followed this course, except that the Puritan demand for a Bible without the Apocrypha led the publishers to begin to omit the Apocrypha sheets from some copies, from 1599 on.

This Protestant depreciation of the Apocrypha led the Council of Trent in 1546 to reaffirm acceptance of them all but II Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh, which were relegated to an appendix following the New Testament. Luther called them useful and good to read, but not scripture.

The Church of England in its Sixth Article indorses the reading of them for example of life and

instruction in manners. But the Westminster Confession, framed principally by Presbyterian divines, in 1648 declared they were not to be otherwise used than other human writings.

As Sir Frederic Kenyon has put it, the Puritans persecuted the Apocrypha, and we cannot altogether blame them, for while the historical interest and value of the Apocrypha are considerable, their religious levels are seldom high. It was this Puritan influence no doubt that led the British and American Bible societies in 1827 to decide that they would no longer use funds given to them in the publication of the Apocrypha. The result has been that the Apocrypha are now seldom found in any but pulpit or old-fashioned Family Bibles. But it cannot be denied that they formed an integral part of the King James Version of 1611, and George Abbot, archbishop of Canterbury, made an ordinance that anyone who printed the English Bible without them should be imprisoned for a year.

In the Latin version of Tobit and in the earliest English Bibles, Tobias and Sarah are described as giving the first three nights after their marriage to prayer, postponing their wedlock until the fourth. This practice was general in the Middle Ages, and was followed by Louis IX (St. Louis) of France and his queen, upon their marriage in 1234, in imitation of Tobias. To this reading of the Vulgate is due the fact that in the earliest Book of Common Prayer

(1549), Tobias and Sarah, not Abraham and Sarah, are mentioned as the ideal pair: "And as thou didst send thy angel Raphael to Thobie and Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, to their great comfort, so vouchsafe to send thy blessing to these thy servants." Evidently in the later marriage service, Abraham has taken Tobias' birthright. The medieval order of matrimony as laid down in the Use of Sarum, after a similar mention of Tobias and Sarah, concludes with the blessing of the bridal chamber and the marriage bed by the priest, who prays, "Keep thy servants who rest in this bed from all phantoms and illusions of devils"—a manifest reference to the demon who had haunted Sarah and killed her husbands.

The influence of the Apocrypha upon the literature and art of the Middle Ages was considerable. In the *Divine Comedy*, the action of which began on the Thursday before Easter in the year 1300, Dante makes full use of them. The Wisdom of Solomon, Tobit, Judith, I and II Maccabees and II Esdras are all reflected in his lines. His vision of the eagle (the Empire) scattering its feathers over the cross (the church)—meaning that when Constantine removed to Constantinople, he left the imperial authority in the West to the church—is influenced by the Eagle Vision of II Esdras. And the third ring in the Inferno, where the betrayers of their friends are located, is called Tolomea, after that

Ptolemy who murdered the Maccabean Simon and his sons at a banquet (*Inferno*, canto 33; I Macc. 16:11–17).

One of the most interesting monuments of the Middle Ages is certainly the *Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, written about 1275. It paraphrases Judith and Tobit from the Latin Vulgate. It was translated into English and printed in 1483 by William Caxton, who says of Judith that it is read (in church, that is) on the last Sunday of October.

The Church of England still includes some lessons from the Apocrypha in its church year, and the place of the Apocrypha in its Bible is so secure that the King on his accession cannot take the oath of office on a Bible that does not contain them. Upon the monument to the Prince Consort which Queen Victoria erected at Balmoral Castle, she placed an inscription from Wisd. 4:13, 14: "He being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time: for his soul pleased the Lord: therefore hasted he to take him away from among the wicked." The Song of the Three Children has been sung in the Christian church as the Benedicite ever since the fourth century, first in Latin and latterly in English.

Shakespeare named his daughters Judith and Susanna, and the figures of the Apocrypha meet us again and again in the pages of English literature from Chaucer down. Indeed, long before, Gildas,

"the earliest of British historians," is said to have made copious use in the sixth century of II Esdras. Judas Maccabeus and Susanna became the subjects of oratorios by Handel. Judith has in modern times engaged the pens of Thomas Bailey Aldrich and Arnold Bennett, and Bennett's *Ghost* certainly rests on Tobit's Asmodeus, who had been the hero of one of LeSage's novels, two centuries before. Tobit's latest literary revival is in Stella Benson's *Faraway Bride*, which was suggested by the Book of Tobit, being in fact published in England under the title *Tobit Transplanted* (1931). Indeed Susanna and the story of Bel have the leading places in Dorothy Sayers' first *Omnibus of Crime*, and Susanna is included in Clark and Lieber's *Great Short Stories of the World* (1926). But it would take a book to record the literary influence of the Apocrypha.

Like the artists of the catacombs, the painters of the Renaissance reveled in the subjects the Apocrypha afforded. Judith with the head of Holofernes, Susanna surprised by the elders, Tobias walking with his guide, attracted the genius of a long series of painters. Many people get their first introduction to the Apocrypha when they see their romantic characters and dramatic incidents represented in European picture galleries. And it is not without significance for the influence of the Apocrypha upon Renaissance Italy that one of its greatest painters was named after Tobias' guide, Raphael.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. How did early Christian writers regard the Apocrypha?

2. How far back can we trace their use by Christian writers?

3. What did the Roman Christians think of the Book of Wisdom?

4. When the Latin Bible replaced the Greek in Europe, what became of the Apocrypha?

5. How did Dante use the Apocrypha?

6. Which of them appear in the *Golden Legend?*

7. What light do the catacombs throw upon their history?

8. What did Luther do with them?

9. Where do they stand in the first English Bibles?

10. What influence began to eliminate them?

11. How did this first find expression?

12. What attitude have the Bible societies taken?

13. What place have the Apocrypha in the art of the Renaissance?

14. Do the Apocrypha still influence English literature?

15. Which do you consider their chief value—literary, historical, or religious?

CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY

B.C.

Soon after 200	The Book of Tobit
200–175	Ecclesiasticus
168	The Prayer of Azariah
150	The Song of the Three Children
150	The First Book of Esdras
150	The Book of Judith
150–100	The Prayer of Manasseh
100	The Additions to Esther
100–75	The Story of Susanna
100–75	Bel and the Dragon
100–75	The First Book of Maccabees
75–65	The Second Book of Maccabees

A.D.

38–41	The Wisdom of Solomon
100	The Book of Baruch
100	The Letter of Jeremiah
66–270	The Second Book of Esdras

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